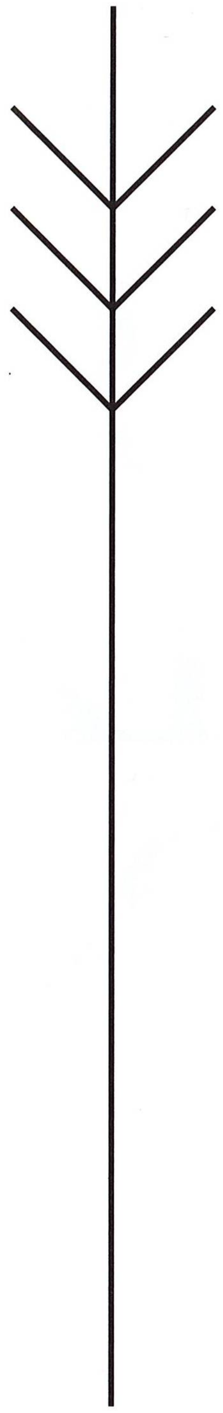


Magnus Nilsson

THE NORDIC BAKING BOOK

Introduction 8

The four grains of the Nordic region 22

A brief history of Nordic bread 34

The importance of *fika* 44

Notes on baking 50

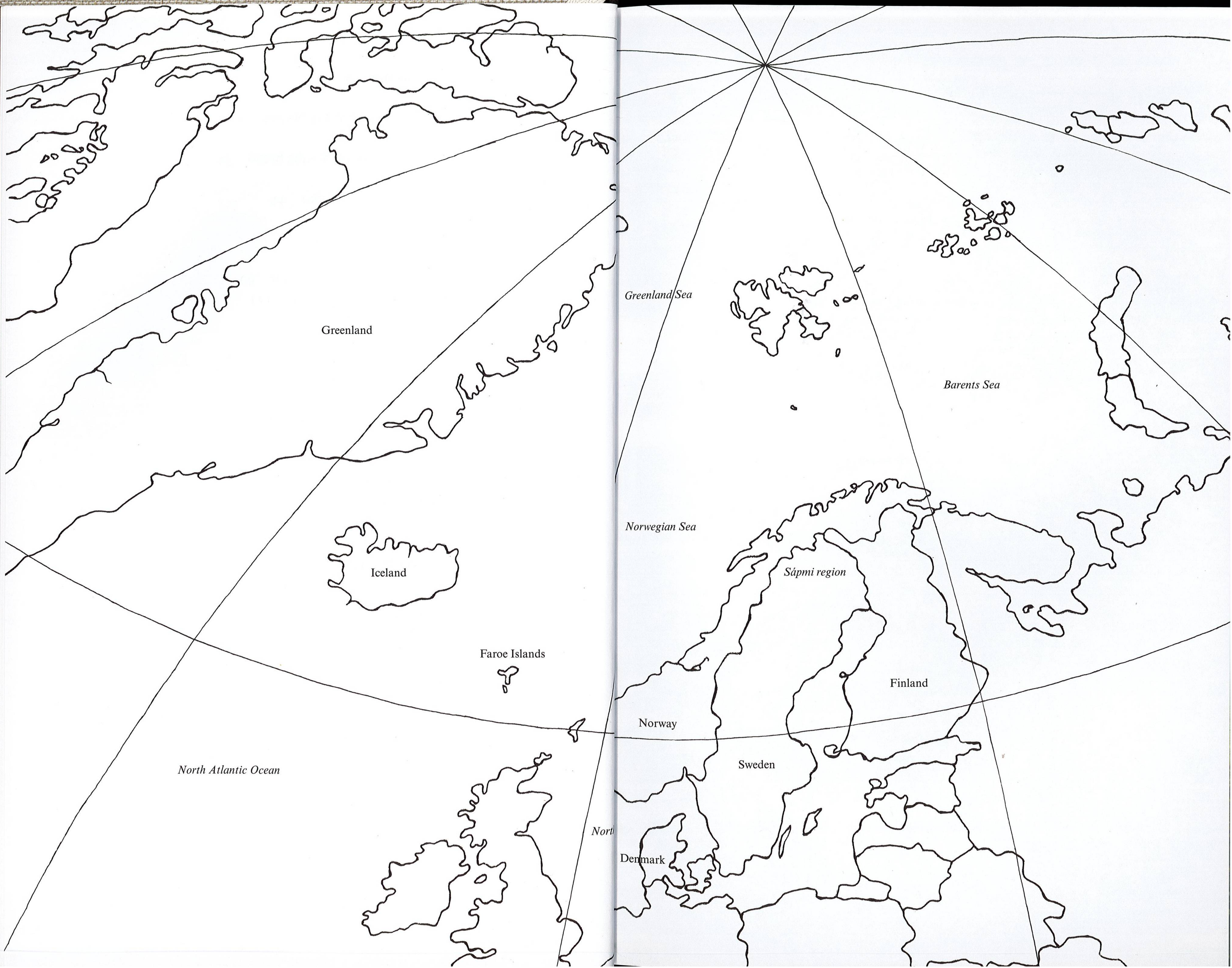
Breads based on wheat flour 90
Breads based on rye flour 122
Flatbreads 146
Rusks and crackers 182
Sandwiches and filled pasties 198
Nordic pizza 214
Pancakes and waffles 218
Porridge and grain soups 236
Sweet pastries leavened with yeast 252
Sweet kringles 290
Doughnuts and deep-fried pastries 300
Short pastries and cookies 312
Muffins and individual pastries 360
Sweets and chocolates 380
Soft cakes 396
Layer cakes and tortes 436
Crumbles and pies 476
Desserts 484
Jam, jellies and cordials 502
Sweet soups and compotes 516
Basic recipes 526

Glossary 544

Directory 552

Index 556

Recipe notes 572


Greenland Sea
Barents Sea
Greenland
Norwegian Sea
Sápmi region
Iceland
Faroe Islands
Finland
Norway
Sweden
North Atlantic Ocean
Nort
Denmark

INTRODUCTION

Previous page: View of Sällsjö lake in autumn (fall) colours, Sweden, 2016.

A seed is a fantastic thing, and even though we animals eat them pretty much all the time in some form or another, we rarely stop to think (at least we humans don't) about what they actually are and marvel over them and nature in general.

Just think, not only has nature figured out how to turn solar radiation into usable energy in such an amazingly efficient and elegant way as it has with photosynthesis, it has also managed to develop an equally elegant system to store the harvested energy almost indefinitely with minimum waste along the way.

These are issues that humanity struggles with today when we try to figure out how to better produce and store energy to fuel our wasteful world, issues that nature solved ages ago without the use of huge factories, rare earth minerals and lots of pollution.

A seed is simply a battery that stores the sun's energy, which has been absorbed by plants during the bright summer months. To produce a seed charged with just the right amount of energy is simply the plant's way of ensuring a successful continuation of its lineage. It is the way a mother plant ensures that a delicate seedling, in the beginning of its life, is less dependent on outside influences than it would otherwise be. It is a way for the young plant to grow past the shadowing underbrush to reach for the sun and to grow at a faster pace than the photosynthesis in the plant's adolescent leaves would be able to support on its own. A seed is also a way to ensure that even if the climate kills the mother plant, the genome of that plant is still preserved intact, in seed form – dormant, just waiting for the right moment to sprout and grow and carry its DNA into the future.

On top of all this – which for obvious reasons is very important for the plants that make them – seeds are sometimes desirable as food for animals. They are among the most concentrated sources of energy that nature has to offer, and because they are so important for the survival of the plants, many of them have some degree of protection designed to make them difficult to eat. Some are toxic and some are encased in an almost impenetrable shell. Others are naturally difficult to digest because they are supposed to pass through the digestive system of any animal eating them without the seed losing its vitality. The ingenuity of the human race has made us perfectly suited to work around obstacles like these, making seeds as food more important for us than for almost any other animal (except perhaps some specialized bird who planned its whole lifelong diet on a single type of seed it really liked). We have devised methods to get rid of toxins through fermentation, rinsing and many other ways. By using tools we easily crack the shell of almonds and other nuts to get to the fatty seed inside, and perhaps most importantly, we have figured out how to change the properties of hard-to-digest carbohydrates in the seeds of grasses by cooking or baking them.

All modern cereal crops are in fact the seeds of grasses, regardless of whether we are talking about corn (maize), rice or wheat. Without them, and without the combination of them and human eagerness to solve problems, there would be no baking, and probably no civilization for that matter.

In the Nordic region grains still have huge importance in the food culture. We used to get a significant part of our energy intake from grains simply because we had to, especially through the winter months, when harvesting fresh foods was not really possible because of the weather. Today, we could import all the foods we would ever need from other parts of the world, and we no longer need to eat stored grains in winter to survive, but we still do so because we like to. It is engrained in us to like what once sustained us, and if you removed all the grains from Nordic food culture there wouldn't be much left.

Some years ago I wrote a book about Nordic food in general. It contained lots of information about all kinds of aspects of eating and cooking in the region. *The Nordic Cookbook* is a documentary book in the sense that the recipes weren't my own – I simply collected them and compiled them in a way that made it possible for people to understand and use them. An important aspect of that was to make the recipes and my own food culture understandable to those who didn't grow up in the Nordics, and who therefore didn't have the kind of knowledge that many traditional recipes assume you have, a type of understanding that you can only really get by growing up somewhere or living there for a very long time. I felt that this went some way towards solving a big problem with Nordic food culture: that it is so misunderstood. Most people never see past the flurry of recipes and variations of a handful of iconic dishes like gravlax, herrings and meatballs. Or articles about very ambitious Nordic restaurants like my own (Fäviken) and a few more, which are all fantastic at what they do, but don't reflect the food culture of people inside their homes. I wanted to produce a tool that could help people to easily gain a deeper insight into what we eat in this region and hopefully by doing so, inspire many, both in the Nordics and elsewhere, to cook dishes from the region and thereby become a part of Nordic culture, or at least learn that there is more to it than what first seems to be the case.

The Nordic Baking Book is very much a continuation of the work with the previous book. It is researched in the same way, with me studying what others have written and otherwise documented, and travelling across the whole region to photograph and to interview people about what they bake. The goal has been to create a recipe book that represents as many people as possible in as many parts of the Nordic region as possible.

The big difference between the first book and this one is that the first one had to be very general for all of the recipes to fit and for all aspects of food in the region to be represented. This book is specialized and has allowed me to dig much deeper. If the section on buns in the first book contained one basic recipe (the most representative one) for the dough plus three variations of fillings and a picture, the same chapter in this book still contains the most representative basic recipe, plus two more; it still has the three most common fillings plus something like fifteen more. In addition, it has step-by-step illustrations on how to create the various shapes of wreaths, knots and braids as well as having four times the amount of photos showing many more recipes than the other book.

It was important to me that this book, as much as with the first book, didn't become some ridiculous list of antiquated recipes that no one cooks any more. I wanted it to be a snapshot of what people actually bake today, perhaps with the occasional look in the rear view mirror at a recipe, which, even if it is uncommon today, explains something about how we do things now.

When I started researching and compiling recipes, something very unexpected soon proved a real difficulty. This unforeseen complication was that I had to define what baking was. I had to sort of draw a line in the sand when it came to what was ultimately going to make it into the book. With *The Nordic Cookbook* this had been easy. It welcomed all types of recipes and whether or not they made the book was simply based on whether they had enough cultural relevance for a large enough part of the population of the region. It was simple mathematics really. You may be thinking to yourself, 'Right, now how hard can it be to decide what goes into a baking book or not?' Well, it was much harder than I expected it to be. Here is an example of why:

Let's say that what defines whether something belongs in a baking book or not is whether it has been cooked in an oven, that is, if it has been baked. This seems reasonable, doesn't it? After all, the book is called *The Nordic Baking Book* and all that. In the beginning I felt that this was indeed the best way forward and didn't think much about it. The problems, though, quickly started accumulating like dark clouds on a warm summer's day. I tried to consider them minor inconsistencies, which in a book of this size is unavoidable, so I ignored them for as long as possible until I couldn't anymore because the book was becoming a mess.

If baking in an oven is a prerequisite, does that mean that the ten most common deep-fried pastries of the region, of which five are absolutely essential to Nordic Christmas celebrations, then get skipped even if most people would consider making them to be an act of baking? Should the pancake chapter only contain three oven-baked pancakes and I just pretend, when explaining the ins and outs of Nordic pancake culture, that the fifteen recipes for pancakes cooked in a pan on the stove, that are now in that chapter, don't exist even if they are more culturally important than those baked in the oven? Or should I just have skipped the pancakes altogether for the sake of consistency and implied that we don't cook them?

No, the use of an oven cannot be the defining factor. But how about if we say that all recipes must contain grains. Well, it would fix the problems mentioned above with the pancakes and the deep-fried pastries, but other problems would follow with this approach. In the chapter describing desserts in the Nordic region there is a whole bunch of recipes primarily based on everything from milk to egg to berries, but where grains are not part of the process at all or where they play a very small supporting role. Should I just pretend that all we eat after a meal is pie, which contains grain and is luckily baked in an oven?

And how do you treat all the supporting basics needed to execute the actual baking recipes in the book? Do you leave them out because they are not strictly defined as baking even if they are part of a recipe that is to be baked? That's what most books do. Or they repeatedly include the same ingredients and method as part of multiple recipes, something that's unthinkable when you need to fit as many different recipes as possible into a book. If *The Nordic Cookbook* had been constructed like many modern recipe books it would contain no more than perhaps 120 recipes, a number that would hardly represent the region well enough.

If a recipe contains strawberry jam or says that it is often served with strawberry jam, wouldn't you rather the book in question supplied you with a reference to a separate kick-ass recipe for said jam located somewhere within the book? Or would you just like to be told that the jam was needed and leave it at that? I think that one of the hallmarks of any great recipe book is that it supplies the supporting information needed to make, if not all, at least the vast majority of the various parts of the recipes in that book.

In the end I decided to include anything and everything that intuitively made sense to me to have it there, as long as people in the Nordics cooked or baked it, and as long as it served a purpose for the usability of the book.

The Nordic Baking Book contains pretty much all the dishes of the Nordic region containing grains: from porridge to pasties, as well as recipes for breads, cakes, cookies and pastries. But it also provides you with all the information necessary to understand why those recipes are actually important to us. It also includes the supporting recipes you need to make every part of the dishes and recipes described throughout the book. Because of this approach, there is a whole chapter on making jams and cordials, as well as a large basic recipes section that tells you how to make pastry cream and chocolate sauce, and all kinds of things that aren't strictly baking but which are referred to and used in many of the dishes in the book.

It should really be called *The Nordic Grain-dishes-baking-pasties-pastries-desserts-sweets-jams-and-cordials-and-anything-else-vaguely-associated-with-the-aforementioned-subjects Book*. Imagine the poor designer commissioned to figure out what the cover would look like.

Anyhow, I really do hope that you read this book and that you bake and cook from it. That you dare to make the recipes your own and not just follow the instructions I have written but adapt them to your preferences and the circumstances in which you live. Finally, I wish that on top of doing all of that stuff I said earlier you come to enjoy the whole process. I know I have done so immensely. To get paid to learn about what you are interested in is an amazing privilege and I know I will miss working on this book more than I have with any of the other books I have written.

How The Nordic Baking Book was written and credit to those who helped the most

It says in places that I researched, wrote and shot the photographs for this book, and it sounds like I did it all on my own but I didn't.

Firstly, a documentary book like this takes an enormous amount of research. This bit I enjoy, but less so turning the material into functioning recipes. The thing with collecting recipes from many different sources and people is that they are inevitably inconsistent in yield, ingredients and many other factors.

For this book, my wife Tove, who is both an excellent baker and a great writer, has helped a lot as she did most of the recipe development, essentially turning all of these varied, weird and inconsistent recipes into something that will work in most home kitchens without being misrepresentative to the food culture of the region.

For my research I have also had access to an amazing panel of people from across the Nordic region. They have helped me out by answering questions to which I didn't know the answer and by steering me in the right direction. They also made sure that the chosen material is not only representative but also correct, so a huge thank you to Kenneth Nars, Andreas Viestad and Gudrun Einarsdottir for this.

I have also enjoyed the help of food culture historian Associate Professor Richard Tellström just as I did with *The Nordic Cookbook*. He is one of the most knowledgeable people on the culture of cooking and eating in the Nordic region and he has made sure that the whole manuscript makes sense, and that it is historically correct and coherent, something which is not entirely easy when writing a book as full of such varied information as this one.

Because I am a cook and not a baker, I felt that I needed to get some expertise to theoretically assess the recipes and subsequently to try them out. Petrus Jakobsson of the great Petrus bakery in Stockholm has helped me out with this. His advice has been enormously valuable and this book would contain recipes less well functioning and more difficult to execute if he hadn't been involved. He also baked pretty much all of the breads photographed throughout the book.

A very special thank you to Erik Olsson, my friend and the only photographer who has followed me and Fäviken from the very beginning. Erik is the person who has photographed all of the food in my other books and I think that he was also expecting to photograph this one. When I told him that I wanted to do it myself, he didn't get upset and angry as I think many people would have. Instead he offered me the use of his studio in Stockholm where the food photos were taken, and he volunteered to be there with me and assist. Without his calm and routine, I don't think I would have been able to get the photos done. With Erik it has never been about prestige, but always about doing great things together, this is a rare and amazing character trait.

Finally, Sophie Hodgkin, who has been the project editor on my last two books and whom I specifically requested for this book, deserves a huge thank you. You should all know that I am not always an easy person to work with, and I don't do things the same way as most people. I can be very particular about tiny details and can behave a bit like a child when my texts are being edited. I firmly believe that very little of any interest ever happens when things are just chugging along and people are comfortable everywhere, such as when authors deliver their material a week before the deadline and never question anything.

It is rare to find someone who is both able to get right all of the various details of the mammoth project it actually is to produce a book like this, and at the same time try not to change the sometimes chaotic and questioning way of working of someone like myself too much. It might sound like Sophie just lets me do whatever and that I like her because of this, but this is absolutely not the case. She is, without any question, in charge of the production of her books. There is no mistaking that, but she manages to create a very special balance between structure and creativity and between discipline and freedom. She is the kind of person who will send you a very polite and friendly message with a stern undertone just when you need the latter. For that I thank her.

Magnus Nilsson
Fäviken, Spring 2018

THE FOUR GRAINS OF THE NORDIC REGION

Previous page: Barley field and barn, North Sweden 2016.

When I grew up and went to school, I was taught about what was called 'the four grains' (*de fyra sädesslagen*): wheat, rye, barley and oats. What I took away from this, except some basic knowledge of these important cereal crops, was that there were no other grains. This was obviously wrong and it wasn't because a teacher specifically told us that these four were the only grass seeds eaten by humans, but because they didn't tell us that there was anything more. And for an eight-year-old boy in north Sweden during pre-internet times, omitting to mention rice, corn (maize) and all the other grains in the context of world staple foods was pretty much the same as saying they weren't important. I mean, Nordic food has almost all cereals grown on a large scale across the world represented in one recipe or another, though often not in everyday dishes but rather in festive ones, like Rice Porridge (page 242) for Christmas. My image of grains as part of a daily diet, in savoury foods, baked goods and other preparations, was for a long time largely based on this knowledge and what I ate when I was growing up.

So why was the importance of these four grains so heavily emphasized? Probably because in an era where most of the calories consumed in any given part of the world were also produced in or around that part of the world, these four grains made up the vast majority of what was eaten here, simply because between the four of them you successfully cover pretty much all of the growing zones of the Nordic region. In a historical context, the grains that were grown in a specific part of the region and the characteristics they have, also greatly informed what the baked goods and food of that area would have looked like, and to some extent they still do so today. Despite us now being able to move foods around the world very easily, the way we had to eat in the past is a big influence on how we want to eat today.

Because of our climate with cold winters, the food culture of the Nordic region was always heavily reliant on stored foods. It was important to figure out ways of producing more food than was needed during the light summer months and to preserve it somehow for winter when it would be consumed. If you think of them like little solar energy storage units, grains are the perfect solution for this. They grow easily in summer with much less work per harvested calorie than almost anything else accumulating solar energy through photosynthesis. As an added perk they dry and store really well in their whole form because that's what seeds are designed by nature to do. A huge variety of different kinds of grains can be turned into an even greater range of preparations, much more varied than for any other specific food group.

Wheat (*Triticum aestivum*)

The king of western cereal crops is what rice is for Asia and maize is for the Americas. The wheat of today is, for the most part, highly selected and refined bread wheat, but has its origins in older grains, such as emmer and spelt that are now starting to become increasingly popular again. Emmer is thought to have been grown in the Levant as early as 9,600 BC. It was also the first wheat that developed into something that could be considered bread wheat in the sense that it could produce enough gluten to form a loaf. These particular emmer strains have been found in Macedonia and is thought to date back to about 1,350 BC. Emmer, einkorn and spelt types of wheat have been grown in the Nordics since Neolithic times.

It's unclear exactly when bread wheat resembling modern varieties started to be grown in the Nordics, but the first written documents mentioning it are all from the fifteenth century when this type of crop was still comparatively rare. Throughout the years high protein types of wheat have increased in importance and are now the most common cereal crops in the Nordic region (and the whole world) despite the fact that they only grow in a small part of it. Wheat is mostly produced on a large scale in Denmark and in the southernmost regions of Sweden. There are smaller quantities grown in other parts of the Nordics, but since other grains ripen better in cooler climates and leaner soils than wheat does, those grains have also become more important crops in those parts of the region. Wheat is best grown in clay soils with quite a high content of lime, and it needs to have a long summer to ripen properly.

Bread wheat can be divided into two categories when grown: winter wheat and spring wheat. Winter wheat, which is the most common one for making bread flour because it generally contains more protein, is sown in autumn (fall) and needs to be subjected to cold winter temperatures in the ground to flower and produce grains. This process is called vernalization. Spring wheat is sown in spring and produces grains the same year with no need for a period of cold weather. Which kind of wheat a farmer chooses to grow depends on the local climate and also on how he or she has decided to run their crop rotation.

For the majority of us, the most unique and desirable feature of wheat is its ability to form large amounts of gluten. Gluten is a complex composite containing hundreds of various proteins originating in the wheat grain. The two most important ones are gliadin and glutenin, which when worked with water form a cross-linked submicroscopic network. Put very simply, when kneaded together these two proteins attach to each other and provide dough with the stretch and elasticity needed to shape it and to allow it to rise into a loaf when leavened with yeast or something else.

Today, with modern transportation, wheat is used extensively in recipes all across the Nordic region, but historically it was far more common in the south where it was grown. There is a direct link between the grains that were grown locally and the types of breads people used to bake in any given part of the region. Generally speaking, the further north and the further from the coast you get, the less wheat people will have had access to, and consequently the further north and further from the coast you get the flatter and thinner the traditional breads happen to be. Where I grew up in Jämtland, which is both far north and inland, the traditional breads are mostly various flatbreads based on barley, peas or potato. Today, most of the traditional recipes that were historically wheat free have had wheat added to them, most often because it makes the dough easier to handle.

Aside of being used in bread, wheat is also commonly fermented and distilled into vodka.

Rye (*Secale cereale*)

Varieties of rye still grow wild in Turkey and it's from there that what we grow today in other parts of the world is presumed to originate. Archaeological findings point towards 1,800–1,500 BC as a timeframe for when rye started to be grown in Europe, and it became important in the Nordics around the tenth century. Historically, rye was often grown as the first crop in a slash-and-burn growing system, which was commonly practised in Finland. Later in the sixteenth century it was grown in Sweden thanks to the immigration of Finns due to famine caused by a period of cold weather referred to as the 'little ice age'. At its height as a cereal crop, a third of the total harvest of grains in Sweden, and even more of it in Finland, consisted of rye. Even though slash-and-burn pretty much disappeared as a practice, with the increasing values of timber making it unprofitable, I believe that this period is where the taste for rye, which still dominates in certain parts of the Nordic region, was founded.

Rye as a plant is drought resistant and generally very tough. It ripens in somewhat cooler climates than wheat. I imagine that the latter characteristic is the reason why rye was common in the north with its potentially cold summers, and the former why it was common in Central and Eastern Europe, which can have warm weather but also very dry summers. It grows well in both clay and sandy soils and tolerates a large variation of soil pH-levels.

Containing fewer of the proteins needed to form gluten than wheat, rye doesn't lend itself to baking fluffy breads. You will, in fact, see that most bread in parts of the world where rye was the dominant grain historically, even if they have wheat added to them today, will still be generally denser and flatter (Finnish Rye Bread, page 130), and if shaped into loaves, will often be baked in a pan to keep that shape (Danish Rye Bread, page 128).

Regions that have a lot of rye-based breads in their repertoire often use more sourdough and slow-leavening techniques resulting in freshly acidic breads. I am going to go out on a limb and make a totally unscientific guess here as to why this is. Imagine when industrial yeast specifically for baking was introduced in the nineteenth century and spread across the Nordic region, and remember that before this event all breads were leavened exclusively with sourdough starters. Those who made their breads predominately from wheat were rewarded with shorter leavening times and more consistent results when they moved over to using yeast. Plus their breads tasted sweeter and were even more fluffy than before. In short, a development easy to like when bread had previously tasted the same for as long as you could remember. Those in the parts of the world where rye was the dominant grain were, by contrast, as disappointed with industrial yeast as the wheat people were elated. As previously mentioned, rye doesn't contain anywhere near as much gluten-forming protein as wheat does and the increased leavening potential of the industrial yeast could therefore not be harnessed. The resulting increase in the degree of fluffiness was negligible and people wondered what all the fuss with this new product was really about. Rye also doesn't ferment as quickly as wheat because of the mix of carbohydrates it contains, so any significant change in production time was not achieved either. The rye bakers simply had the same level of fluff as before, roughly the same leavening times as before and overall not enough motivation to go with modernity and switch to yeast on a broad front. This is something I think we can all thank them for as it has made bread culture today much more varied and interesting.

Barley (*Hordeum vulgare*)

Barley, along with wheat, is one of the oldest cereal crops grown in the Nordics and has been an important source of food for several thousand years. Like many other grains, it originates from wild grass varieties in the Fertile Crescent. It is, however, different from all other grains because it tolerates a much colder climate and a shorter summer than the rest of them. It is possible to grow barley successfully almost all over the Nordic region and it has become the grain of choice in parts where wheat, and sometimes even rye, doesn't grow.

Barley has been, and is still, used for many different things, which signifies its historical importance as a carbohydrate staple in marginal climates. It is commonly ground into flour for bread, hulled as part of savoury dishes, malted for brewing and coarsely ground as energy-rich feed predominately used for milking animals.

Like rye, barley contains very little of the proteins that can form gluten and cannot support much leavening on its own. Even though the low gluten content of barley makes it impossible to make fluffy loaves from, it does make it a lot easier to roll out large and thin rounds of flatbread as the dough inherently has less stretch to fight against than if it was based on wheat. In parts of the Nordic region where barley has been the dominant grain, we can see that flatbreads of various kinds are the dominant type of bread, at least historically.

There are two main groups of barley: two-row or six-row barley. These refer to the way the grains are placed on the ear of the straw, in two rows or in six rows. Generally speaking, two-row barley has less protein and more easily fermentable carbohydrates and is favoured for brewing, while six-row barley is more commonly turned into flour and animal feed.

Oats (*Avena sativa*)

Oats are different from most other grains used in Western cooking since they don't originate from the Fertile Crescent, but rather from southern Europe. Oats are presumed to have been selected from wild oats (*Avena sterilis*) and the first examples of domesticated oat kernels date back about 2,000 years.

Oats started to become important throughout the Nordics in the eighteenth century and, for example in Sweden, peaked in popularity around the mid-nineteenth century when 50 per cent of all grains harvested came from oats.

Oats tolerate cold summers well and can be grown on almost any soil except one containing too much lime. However, the crop does not respond well to drought and needs a consistent and plentiful supply of water. For this reason oats are mostly sown very early in spring, when the weather is still wet and cool, and in the northern parts of the Nordic region.

Oats do not contain gluten and were historically mostly used in porridges, grain soups and as animal feed. Despite the grain itself not containing any gluten, oats are often processed using the same equipment as other grains, so it is important for those who suffer from coeliac disease to make sure that the oats they eat are processed on their own and the equipment used is entirely free from gluten.

A more modern use for oats, which has become increasingly popular, is as the main ingredient in various substitutes for dairy products, such as oat milk and oat cream.

The rolled oat, which is steamed as part of the production process, is also suitable for recipes where you want to use a grain for bulk and texture but where you do not bake or cook it, such as Chocolate Oatmeal Balls (page 388), because the starch is already cooked so the finished product doesn't taste starchy.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF NORDIC BREAD

Previous page: Sandhammaren, south Sweden, spring 2018.

Over the last millennium, bread has held a very special place in Nordic food culture. It carries connotations of taking care of your family, and since the introduction of Christianity to the area around AD 1000, sharing and breaking bread has also been a communal ritual act, with bread compared in Christian significance to the gift of children.

The Nordic region has always been characterized by extreme and changing seasons, with icy and snowy winters and warm summers, so the food that was meant to sustain you in the winter months had to be produced during the short summers. The flavour of dry bread and other cereals that have been stored in winter is consequently one of the characteristic tastes of Nordic food culture. Before the introduction of the potato to the Nordic region around the year 1800, bread was also the undisputed staple in Nordic cuisine.

The oldest record about bread in this region is found on the runestone at the church in Tune, Østfold, Norway, and dates back to AD 400. On this large stone, carved with runes by ancient Scandinavians in a remembrance of a husband and perhaps chief or important warrior, a wife writes about bread and the love for her children and her deceased husband:

'*I, Wiw after Wodurid, he who has provided the bread, made these runes and raised the stone for Wodurid. Three daughters prepared the funerary ale, as the most beloved of heirs.*'

In this text bread is used both literally and as metaphor for caretaking. It captures two of the three most important grain dishes in the Nordic region: bread and ale. Only porridge is missing but one can assume that too was served at Wodurid's funeral.

Why did we start eating bread in the Nordic region? One suggestion is that Nordic soldiers were the first consumers of bread, since some of them had served in the Roman army and had encountered the flat army breads. Eating bread became a way of showing people at home that you had fought on the continent; quite simply, you had 'seen the world'. Bread is also a very portable food; it weighs little, contains a lot of energy and therefore kept the Nordic peoples moving for more than 1,000 years.

The Nordic words for bread are variations of Germanic words, such as *brot* (German) and bread (English). The Danes and Norwegians say *brød*, the Swedes say *bröd* and the Icelanders say *brauð*. The Finnish word for bread, *leipä*, is probably a Germanic loan word. None of the words are based on the Latin word for bread, pane, so perhaps Nordic bread eating is parallel to that of the Romans? The Nordic words for bread are also linguistically related to the word 'brew', as in brewing beer and low-alcohol beverages. Baking bread and brewing beer were indoor activities and therefore part of a woman's duties. The ability to skilfully bake bread and brew good-quality ale gave women high status.

There is further evidence of the high value of bread from the Roman Iron Age, when bread was placed as a gift on the funeral pyres of the era. The oldest archaeological finds of funeral bread (around AD 200) indicate that breads were smaller than modern breads. They were somewhat flat and round, about the size of one's palm. However, it is not known for certain whether the funeral breads were also breads that people ate. They could simply have been sustenance for the journey to another world. The small size of the bread offerings suggests that, if they were eaten, then they were likely a part of a larger meal, something to complement other food being eaten. It was not until the early Middle Ages (around AD 900–1100) that bread became more common and increasingly more popular than porridge.

The types of Nordic bread were strongly related to whether the grain was milled by hand or with the help of wind or water power. For climate reasons, the Nordic region could be split into different areas based on bread type: soft breads in the South and often dry breads in the North. In southern Scandinavia, wind-powered mills were used early on and so these windy areas were characterized by soft breads, since people could grind grain all year round and therefore bake the year around. In central and northern parts of the Nordic region by contrast, where water freezes to ice in colder months, it was only possible to use watermills when there was plenty of flowing water, such as after the snow had melted in the spring or after the autumn (fall) rains. It was, however, difficult to prevent insects attacking the flour so people preferred to bake immediately after milling the flour, and then to store the bread in dry iron crates or hang it from a beam in the ceiling. In the northernmost parts of the region with extra long winters, it was possible to store the flour safely without fear of insect damage during the icy winters and thus bake soft bread according to requirement.

Iceland is special since it has always imported grains. The very cold weather combined with a lack of land and soil to grow cereals on mean it has not had its own extensive grain cultivation. Historically, Icelandic bread was rare and enjoyed only on special occasions. One of the more unusual breads in the Nordic region is the Icelandic fried wafer-thin Christmas bread *laufabrauð* (page 176). In cultures where bread is not such a big part of the diet, it was common to prepare grains with a hand grinder.

Bread has had different roles among the ethnic minorities in the Nordic region. The Sami people eat a flatbread called *gahkku*, which was traditionally stone-baked, while the Jewish minority has different varieties of the traditional Jewish breads, such as challah. When people have moved between the Nordic countries they have often continued to bake their bread and taken their baking traditions with them.

All kinds of grains have been used for baking bread in the Nordic region. Flatbreads have been baked using barley, because barley flour does not rise and it tolerates cold and frost better than other cereals. Rye and oats were used for flatbreads as well as loaves of bread. Often several cereals were cultivated together resulting in doughs made with mixed flours, sometimes eked out with pea flour, turnip flour or potato, or if times were especially hard, flour made from bark. Wheat was the most expensive grain and was generally only eaten by the upper classes. As such, although Nordic festive breads were often white and made of wheat, finely sifted barley or rye flour and often seasoned with cumin, anise, fennel or exotic spices, such as cardamom and saffron, everyday breads were coarse and grey, brown or almost black.

In earlier times, bread was made using sourdough or brewer's yeasts. The mid-1800s saw the introduction of the industrially produced compressed yeast, which led to the disappearance of sourdough baking. However, sourdough made an unexpected return with home-baking hipsters in the 2000s and sourdough bread can now be found in most supermarkets.

Written bread recipes were rare before the 1800s, mainly because bread-making skills were tacit knowledge among women and it was, literally, in their hands. It was passed down to the next generation through the actual act of baking. With the industrialization in the nineteenth century – and the introduction of the wood stove, compressed yeast, baking powder and also urban migration – came a new way of baking, resulting in recipe books becoming more important.

Times for baking for bread dough have and still do vary widely. The oldest techniques include cooking in water and baking on stone or iron slabs, although these techniques only allow for a small number of breads to be baked at once. Other variations include deep-frying bread in rendered sheep or pig fat, or cooking in frying pans. In Iceland, they still have a rye bread that is cooked in hot volcanic springs or slowly on the stove for 12–24 hours.

Likewise, the size of bread has varied throughout the ages: from small, single-serving breads, to large, round loaves. Southern Sweden and Denmark are known for *kavring* (page 128), a rye bread of up to 50 cm/20 inches in diameter, 10–15 cm/4–6 inches thick and weighing up to 8 kg/17 ½ lbs per bread. Square bread baked in iron moulds became common in the 1700s at military bakeries. Square bread was preferential to round bread since the entire oven surface could be used for baking, with the breads also taking up less space to transport on land and at sea.

In the past, for more extensive baking during the colder months, people used baking ovens or special baking houses. The largest ones were considered a significant investment and it was not uncommon for several farms to build a joint bake house, so that big batches of bread could be baked in large ovens. Bread baking was a women-only task and could take up to a week, usually done in late autumn (fall) or late winter when the workforce was not needed out in the fields. In townhouses without ovens, people would have prepared the bread dough at home and brought it to a professional bakery for baking. There were also mobile bakers in the cities who travelled to people's homes, prepared the dough and baked the bread in the home or in a bakery.

The breakthrough during the second half of the nineteenth century of cheap beet sugar, imports of large amounts of American and Australian wheat, industrially produced baking powder and the modern wood stove, saw the rise of sweet breads and buns. The older tradition of offering beer or liquor when receiving guests was replaced with serving coffee with cookies and sweet buns.

There is a bread for every occasion in the Nordic countries, with large regional variations and completely different bread types within the same country. In the weeks leading up to Christmas, people will bake special Christmas breads, such as crullers (page 308), saffron buns (page 276), and almond tart shells (page 344), made with finely sifted flour.

Bread has different functions in Nordic food culture; it can be a meal in itself, a complement or sometimes an ingredient. Open-faced sandwiches (page 204) are eaten for breakfast in all the Nordic countries, with popular toppings including butter or margarine as well as hard cheese, whey cheese, ham, sausage, smoked or salted fish, and vegetables. Historically, different types of animal fats were mixed and used on everyday bread, while butter or lard were used for festive occasions. In the western Scandinavian regions of Denmark, Norway and Iceland, people eat sandwiches for both breakfast and lunch and it is not uncommon to have a packed lunch sandwich. In the eastern Scandinavian regions of Sweden and Finland, where people normally have a cooked meal for lunch, the sandwich is seen as a complement to another dish. The meal can start with a cheese sandwich, followed by the main course. You can also have another cheese sandwich with your main course. And if that doesn't fill you up, you can finish off with an extra cheese sandwich. At the same time, across Scandinavia it has been common throughout history to have pieces of dry bread in soup, yogurt or milk as an evening meal or snack. It is also customary, at restaurants as well as at home, to serve different types of bread – soft white and dark bread, and in Sweden, Norway and Finland some kind of hard bread might be offered too. Butter and bread are included in the price in restaurants with the status of a restaurant sometimes being defined by the quality of the bread it serves.

The popularity of soft bread has increased in the last few decades despite new diets. Italian breads, such as focaccia or bread innovations like ciabatta, have become particularly popular in cafés. Extensive migration means that more bread varieties are eaten today in the Nordic region. If a traditional bread of your liking is not available in a store – today, there is a large range of breads, with a typical Swedish supermarket stocking 150 types of soft bread, more than 50 types of crispbread and up to 20 types of flatbread – it can be baked at home.

Today, bread still stands for community and togetherness in the Nordic region, and it remains polite to offer bread, even just a little piece of gingerbread, when serving coffee to guests. If you have no bread to offer, you must excuse yourself and say, 'A straight cup of coffee will have to do'.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF *FIKA*

Previous page: Northern Swedish mountain farm, Myhrbodarna, July 2014.

The word *fika* simply means a break for a snack in between meals; most often it includes coffee and sometimes a *fika* can mean only a cup of coffee.

It is a Swedish institution and something that goes on in every Swedish home and in every Swedish workplace. It is a cherished time to spend with friends, colleagues or just on your own. Its existence in the workplace has been heavily debated from time to time in collective agreement negotiations but it has always remained in place.

The typical *fika* would be a cup of coffee, possibly with milk for those who are into that, served with a sweet cookie, cake or bun on the side. It can also be an open-faced sandwich served with coffee, almost like a light lunch.

Fika is typically done quite a few times during a normal day and is probably one of the reasons why Swedes, just after the Finns and just before Danes, are at the very top of the world's coffee consumption per capita, in 2014 beaten only by the Dutch.

My generation, 1980s and onwards, still love our *fika* but we have rationalized it a bit and adapted it to the fact that everyone's workdays aren't as similar as they used to be. I would typically *fika* two times a day and, to illustrate the difference, I will share the meal schedule of my father from when I grew up. I believe he is very representative of his generation and the Swedes in general.

06:00–06:15 Pre-breakfast *fika* in solitude:
Bun and coffee.

07:00–07:30 Breakfast with the kids:
Porridge, or cultured milk and cereal, coffee.

10:00–10:15 *Fika* with colleagues:
Bun, cake or cookie and coffee.

12:00–13:00 Lunch:
Warm food followed by coffee and maybe some cake.

14:15–14:30 *Fika* with colleagues:
Bun, cake or cookie and coffee.

17:30–18:30 Dinner with the family:
Warm food followed by coffee.

21:00–21:30 *Kvällsfika* with the family:
Sandwiches and tea, possibly some cake or a bun.

To have this many meals per day might seem odd today but historically, the further north you lived in the world, the more you had to produce during summer and the time of light to keep you alive in winter. A sixteen-hour day of manual labour was nothing particularly unusual in summer. With passing time and inventions like industrial food production evening out the access to food around the year, and electrical light evening out the difference between day and night, our need for that much food in parts of the year has diminished. The number of calories has probably decreased significantly whilst the number of meals culturally considered normal has remained higher than those in cultures further south. The difference is even visible within Sweden as a country. My family, coming from the north, would not think of not having *kvällsfika* before ending the day. My wife, who comes from the very south of the country, thought we were insane when she first moved. She also thought we were quite insane to eat dinner at 17:30 in the afternoon. Historically, in the very south of Scandinavia, it is not unlikely that dinner would mark the end of the farmer's work day as it would grow dark in the evening also in summer. In the north, people probably preferred a slightly earlier dinner, almost like a second, very late lunch allowing them to go outside and work another six to eight hours afterwards before finishing their day, also making it necessary to eat another meal before going to bed.

NOTES ON BAKING

Previous page: Tórshavn, Faroe Islands, spring 2014.

How to use this book

I am more of a cook than a baker, which I think makes me well suited to write a book about baking. I don't assume as many things when baking as does a professional baker, but at the same time, because of my profession as a chef I do have quite a bit of inside info, which should prove helpful. I strongly suggest you read the whole of this chapter or at least the parts that relate to whatever you are baking for the day. It does contain quite a few general instructions and tips that are useful to achieve a delicious result. I also recommend quickly browsing through the glossary (page 544) and recipe notes (page 572). They contain information on details like what kind of wheat flour to use if it says wheat flour in a recipe (page 547), what kind of sugar, how much fat the cream referred to here and there contains, and how to substitute certain ingredients that might be tricky to find outside of the Nordic region (and sometimes even within it).

Everyone always tells me that baking is a science and cooking is more of an art. I think what they are trying to imply is that in cooking you can be a bit more playful when you follow recipes, while in baking you have to follow them to the letter. I don't think this is true at all. Baking and cooking are just the same. If you understand the basic functions that govern what results you are going to end up having, if you understand cause and effect, you can play as loosely with recipes in baking as you can in cooking. I think that people feel this way simply because most of us cook more often than we bake, so naturally we develop a greater intuitive understanding for cooking; this goes for both home cooks and professional cooks. I mean you will get far by following the recipes in this book to the letter too. They are exact and they are all functional, at least with the ingredients and circumstances where they were collected. However, I would really like to encourage you not to be too fixated about following recipes. It's more fun if you make what you choose to bake into your own thing. Food culture is ever-changing and depends on the people who practise it and the ingredients where it is practised. If a recipe for a cake in this book contains golden syrup (made from sugar beet) and cardamom and you can't get golden syrup but you have treacle, and you don't like cardamom, then this shouldn't discourage you – make the cake with treacle and replace the cardamom with another sweet spice that you like. The result won't be exactly the same as if my grandma had baked it in Sweden, but maybe you have invented a new recipe that's even more delicious and will be a future classic where you live. The same applies if a recipe contains a teaspoon of cardamom and you really love cardamom – go ahead and double it, why not? What's the worst that can happen? Perhaps it gets a bit bitter and gritty, or it might just make the whole thing more delicious to you!

Finally, trust your sense of what seems reasonable. Ingredients vary a lot across the globe and it's impossible to write recipes that can be followed to the letter in every single part of the world and give the same result, even if they are executed exactly the same way. Most of the recipes in this book have been tested not just once but many times by myself and a team of testers, and not just in Sweden but in various other countries too. But still, if the recipe says that a dough should be loose and sticky, and it doesn't look loose and sticky to you, then you are probably right and should act accordingly.

Anyhow, here are a few things, which I find are important to know. Happy baking!

How to knead dough

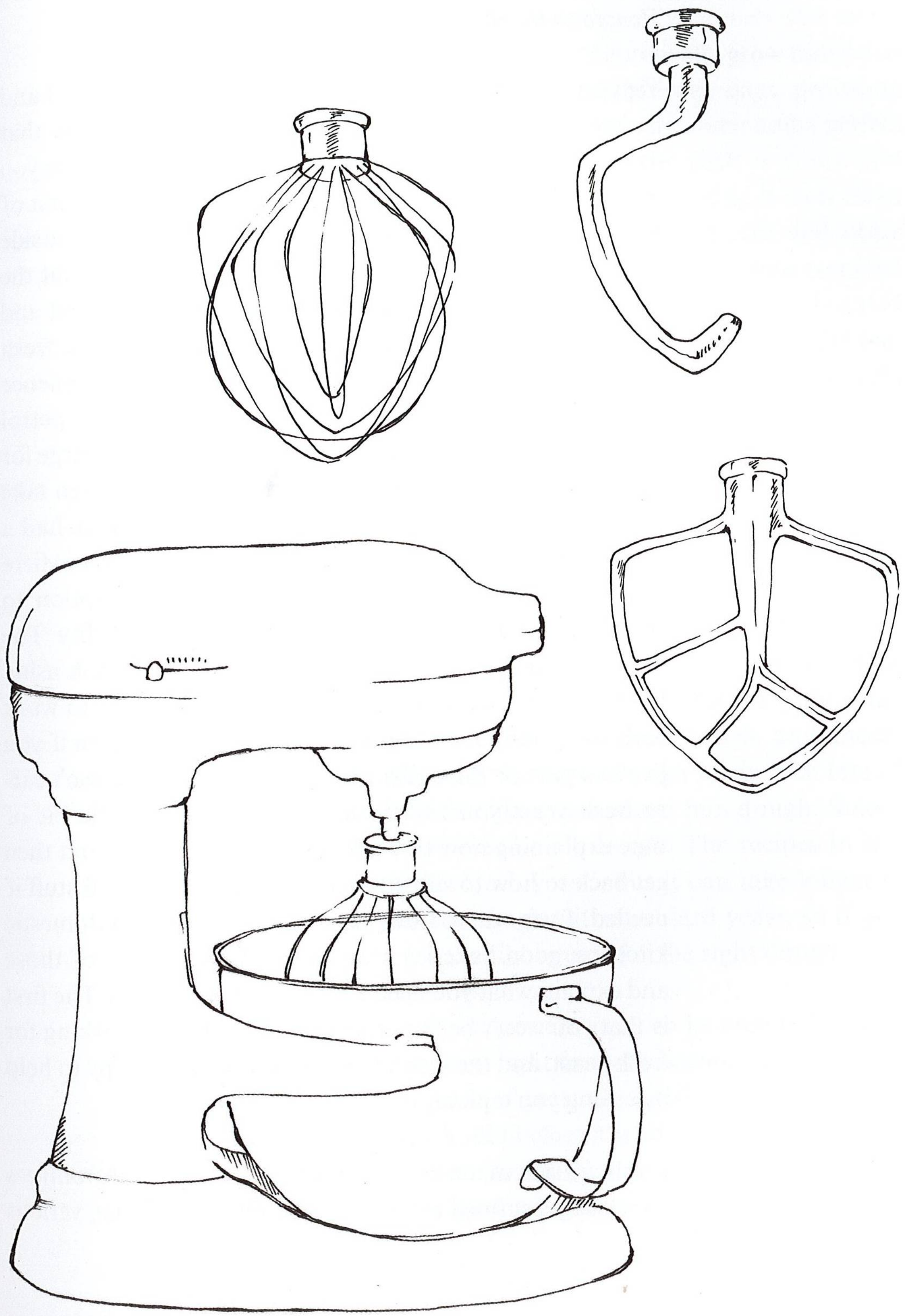
We knead dough first to mix the ingredients together and then to develop the gluten (page 27). Most often the purpose is to do a bit of both. A very simplified rule of thumb would be that the higher the proportion of wheat flour in a recipe and the stronger (higher in gluten-developing proteins) that flour is, the more kneading the dough can take and the more gluten it will develop, provided the dough has enough water to support that amount of gluten developing.

In most recipes, this book calls for the use of a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook, see illustrations on page 57. This is because it's a very good and convenient way of kneading dough, and not all but a lot of people interested in baking will have access to one. If you haven't got a stand mixer or other similar machine, you can always knead by hand. What you can't do though, at least not with most of the doughs in this book, is use a hand mixer with dough hooks. They are not very good when it comes to kneading, as they are too small and tend to spin too fast.

If the goal is to create a stretchy dough that will rise nicely (which is always the goal unless something else is clearly stated in the recipe), then the way to do the whole thing if you do it by hand is to start it off in a bowl and work the ingredients of the dough together until the flour is bound by whatever liquid you are using. When this is done, transfer everything onto a work counter. If you have a really large counter you can mix all the ingredients on that, skipping the bowl part altogether. I do this at work but it tends to make a bit too much of a mess in a domestic environment, which can't be hosed down like a professional kitchen, so at home I use the bowl to start things off.

The way to create gluten while kneading it is to sort of stretch it out. Do this by pressing the dough downwards with the palm of your hand and with a forward motion before folding it back over itself and towards you, at the same time as you are pulling your hands back to repeat the same motion over again. You can move the dough a quarter turn from time to time to make sure that all parts of it get the same amount of kneading. It is possible to hand knead almost all dough, but count on it taking a lot longer than it would in a stand mixer, which mixes and kneads at the same time, and at a pace many times faster than that of human hands. Most of the kneading times in this book can be multiplied by four if you choose to hand knead. There are instances when a stand mixer is not suitable and hand kneading is preferable, like when using very weak (soft) wheat flour. In those cases it's clearly stated in the recipe method how to work the dough and why.

If nothing else is written in the recipe method when it calls for kneading, the stand mixer should run on medium speed. This means faster than slow, but not so fast that the flour jumps out of the mixer before it has been incorporated into the liquid.



Clockwise from top left: whisk attachment, dough hook attachment, paddle attachment and stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment.

How to work with fresh yeast and how to substitute it

Yeast is an amazing thing. It is what leavens our bread and makes it taste so complex. All the recipes in this book that use yeast to leaven are made with fresh yeast, and before you get all irritated about this I am going to explain why. First of all, I do know that fresh yeast is not readily available outside of commercial kitchens in some parts of the world, but the fact is that this is a documentary book explaining, first and foremost, how things are done in the Nordics, where fresh yeast is indeed available in all supermarkets, convenience stores, kiosks and even in many, where the road ends, petrol stations. I remember when growing up if you felt an urge for baking after the food store had closed, you could even take your bike to a news stand by the ferry station, which had a small stash of fresh yeast. In short, it's available everywhere and freeze-dried yeast, which is the alternative option to fresh, is considered only as an emergency commodity. The second thing, which convinced me to write this book using fresh yeast, is that in most recipes it is a lot easier to work with and gives a more reliable result than dried. Even if you live in a part of the world where the news stand doesn't carry fresh yeast you will do fine. I will spend a little bit of time explaining how to work with fresh yeast first and then get back to how to substitute it with the freeze-dried stuff if needed. Even where fresh yeast is not common in domestic kitchens, good bakeries use it, so if you go to one of those and explain what you need I am sure of two things. The first is that you won't be the first one coming to them asking for fresh yeast, and the second, is that they will be happy to help by selling you a piece.

Fresh yeast is made in factories by allowing *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* yeast fungi to multiply in a solution of water, various sugars and nutrients. Yeast can grow extremely fast and a piece weighing only 10 mg can theoretically grow into a 150 ton mountain of live yeast in only seven days, providing there are adequate supplies of nutrients, water and a perfect temperature for it to live in. When the yeast is grown and ready to be harvested it is washed by rinsing it with clean water, a process that removes dead yeast cells and other residue. After this, what is left is compressed into compact blocks, which can be cut. In Scandinavia all yeast cubes sold for domestic use weigh exactly 50 g/2 oz, which is the reason why most recipes from Scandinavia contain that specific amount or an amount evenly divisible or multipliable by 50.

All yeast strains of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* are not exactly the same. They differ in the sense that different strains are good at slightly different things. Some are better at consuming the carbohydrates in grains and some are better at consuming the refined carbohydrates in sugar. Fresh yeast for baking is therefore available in two variations. One especially well suited for dough with no, or only small amounts of added sugars, like bread dough, and another one especially well suited for dough made with lots of added sugar and fat, like sweet wheat bun dough. Standard fresh yeast works for all dough. The recipes in this book simply state 'fresh yeast', but it can take longer to leaven a very sweet dough with standard yeast, so if you can, do try to get the right yeast for the right dough.

To work efficiently, yeast cells need to be evenly dispersed within the dough itself right from the beginning. This is why the weighed-out piece of yeast should always be completely dissolved in some liquid before it is added to a recipe, or before flour is added to the liquid. If the yeast is added to the dough in lumps, even small ones, it will eventually rise, but it will take a lot longer because fewer of the yeast cells can actually get to the carbohydrates in the dough.

The recipes in this book call for a specific temperature for the liquid in which the yeast needs to be dissolved. Warm liquid means that the recipe is aiming for a shorter leavening time, and cold liquid that we want it to take a bit longer. There are many reasons as to why one might want a specific leavening time in a recipe and it will influence the end result quite a bit. In sweet dough, for example, the amount of added sugar is calculated so that what you end up with, once you have executed the recipe according to the indicated method, is just enough to give the right level of sweetness. If you let a dough like that leaven for longer it might, as an example, come out tasting less sweet than you would want it to. On the other hand, in a recipe for bread with a long leavening time the reason for this might be that you want the yeast cells to have a lot of time to work on the carbohydrates in the bread, and not just those that are digested very quickly by it. A lot of the flavours we associate with good bread actually come from this process and shortening an indicated leavening time by, for example, elevating the temperature of the dough, may produce a bread that tastes much less complex and delicious than expected.

Finally, when it comes to fresh yeast, the liquid should never be too warm as this kills part of or all of the yeast when it's added. The rule of thumb is that it should not be more than body temperature (37°C/98.6°F).

For dry yeast, there are many different brands across the world and they all seem to have slightly different suggested methods of use and slightly different concentrations. The ones we have in the Nordics are in 14-g/½-oz packages, which equates to 50 g/2 oz of fresh yeast. Not knowing the concentration of the yeast available to you, it is best to follow the package instructions. However, make sure that you use the amount of dry yeast equivalent to fresh yeast, rather than the same amount as fresh… And don't buy dry yeast in bottles or jars, as it will inevitably lose vitality as soon as you open it for the first time and if you don't use all of it. It's better to buy small sachets if possible.

Leavening and how to judge when something has leavened enough

Leavening in bread making is the fermentation process where yeast consumes carbohydrates in the dough, either those from the flour or in some cases added ones like those in sugar. When a yeast cell consumes carbohydrates and multiplies, it produces carbon dioxide, which is what causes the bubbles in the fermenting dough and thus what makes the dough increase in volume. The fermentation process also creates alcohol, which you can easily detect if you smell raw and still fermenting dough. The bubbles of carbon dioxide are especially important because they are trapped in the complex network of gluten created by the kneading process. These bubbles are almost like balloons and when the bread is later baked, water vapour that is expanding in the heat of the oven gets trapped in the bubbles, forcing them to grow further, creating the final, spongy texture of the bread.

In this book, the leavening is often guided by a visual key, which can be, for example, 'until doubled in size'. The method also often mentions an approximate time that this might take, which is just there to give you a rough idea. The speed at which a dough will leaven depends on so many factors, like the temperature of the room in which you are baking, the quality of the yeast you are using and what the exact composition of your flour happens to be. It's not entirely easy to judge what a dough should look like, and an over-leavened one makes almost as poor a bread as one that hasn't fermented enough.

Use the timings as a rough guideline for your planning, try to follow the visual clues given in the method, and bake often. It's the only way to develop a sensibility for what's perfect for any given recipe.

Ovens, ovens, ovens…

Some recipes in this book specify the use of a very special oven (like a giant wood-fired stone oven for soft flatbreads) if this is the way the recipes are being baked where they originate. In those rare cases I have given an alternative baking method using a more normal appliance when possible. However, the use of a specialist oven is not common in this book, in fact most recipes on the following pages make use of a normal domestic oven. The problem is that normal domestic ovens are very different from one another, especially if they are older or they run on gas as opposed to electricity.

The baking times stated in the recipes are based on the use of a fairly modern, yet standard electric convection oven (with a fan at the back of the cavity to circulate air) for domestic use. Most modern ovens heat up to working temperature in less than 10 minutes so there is no need to turn them on earlier than that, even though many recipes in older books say you should. I have noticed that many recipes in old books actually start with: turn on the oven… This is, in most cases, an unnecessary waste of energy with ovens not older than, let's say, 10 years. If you do have an older oven, or one without the fan in the back, a few things need to be taken into account. First of all, you do need to turn the oven on a bit earlier (like it says in those old books) so that it gets properly hot when needed, but this is probably something you already know. People tend to get very intimate with the quirks of their cooking equipment over time. One more thing that you might need to do is to increase the temperature by about 10°C/50°F to achieve the same level of browning as in an oven where a fan moves the hot air around, and thereby more efficiently conducts heat into whatever you are baking. You might also have to add a few minutes to the cooking time for the same reason. In a convection oven you can cook several baking sheets at the same time, spaced on top of each other, while in a conventional oven you can only bake one sheet at a time, meaning that if you are making more than one sheet of something (as in many recipes in this book) you have to stagger the baking.

If you have a gas oven, roughly the same rules apply to that of an older electric oven. However, I think that those of you with gas ovens should really think about your choice next time you are changing the equipment in your kitchen. Gas ovens are, without exception, less exact, less quick to heat up, less good for the environment, less energy efficient, more difficult to clean and less safe than modern electric ones. It's one thing if an old gas oven is already a part of your home, and if it works you might as well keep it, but what I don't understand is why so many people choose to buy them new, especially since they are generally not even much cheaper than their electric equivalents, neither to buy nor to operate.

How to judge when a bread is done

This book gives you a baking time for most things. However, the time will, of course, be dependent on factors that are out of my control, factors that could potentially affect the time it takes to bake something. It could be that you have an old, slow oven as described earlier, or one that has something wrong with its thermostat so that it reads as though it is 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 when it is actually closer to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. It could be that I have been a bit unclear when writing a recipe so that your loaf has a slightly different shape than mine. There are hundreds of things like these that can affect how long it actually takes to bake something until it's done. I think that it's important to be able to use common sense to judge doneness. The more you bake, the easier it will get to feel whether a bread is just right. This applies to every step, from the texture of the dough, to the leavening, and of course to the baking. With recipes I have used a few times I know by looking at it whether a bread in the oven is done, but with recipes new to me, especially those with lots of grains and seeds in them, and breads that are coloured dark by molasses or something else, I find this difficult. The old baker's method (or possibly urban legend) of picking a bread up and tapping it to hear if it sounds hollow, may make you feel like a pro, but can't really do much other than confirm an already good or bad result. If you take a half-baked loaf out of the oven, pick it up and tap it to find that it still sounds raw, I can tell you straight away that it won't work if you put it back into the oven, or at least not perfectly, as the bread will lose texture. Also, the tapping method only really works well for one type of bread: large loaves with a hard crust. It doesn't work for breads cooked in a loaf pan or for buns or soft-crusted breads.

I think that the best way of confirming the degree of baking, when you haven't been able to work up your intuition to that particular recipe yet, is to use a thermometer. It should be one with a very thin probe and it should be a really fast-read digital one. You shouldn't stick it in the loaf from the beginning. I have seen that this is the preferred modus operandi on some very popular bread blogs, and even though it might appear very exciting for some to watch the temperature tick up degree by degree during 50 minutes, it can also impair the leavening of the bread to introduce a stiff stick into it. By leaving the probe in there it will also heat up from the inside, actually introducing more heat around the probe than in the rest of the bread (metal is a better conductor of heat than dough) making the measurement less accurate. The right way to use a thermometer when judging if a bread is done is to first follow the time indicated in the recipe, perhaps casting a glance into the oven halfway through the baking time (without opening it) and again when three-quarters of the time has passed, just to see that things are looking as you would expect. Then, when the time is up and your alarm goes off, start the measuring procedure by forcing yourself (still without opening the oven door) to decide whether the bread looks done or not simply by looking at it. It's very easy to skip this step and just open the door and shove the probe in there when you know you have that option. However, if the bread isn't done this will be less good for the bread than if you left it a bit longer. Plus, by not asking yourself the question, 'Does this look done to me?', and by just letting the machine tell you, you don't build your intuition for the benefit of many future breads that you are going to make. If the bread doesn't look done to you, it probably isn't, so leave it in for another 5 minutes. It's not like it will ruin a loaf completely even if it happened to be done the first time, bread is not the same as steak or chicken in that sense. If the bread looks and smells done, carefully open the oven door and insert the probe. Do this by first drilling a little hole into the crust with a twirling motion of the probe so that you don't end up shoving the bread around trying to force the needle in. Then, when you have created the entry point, insert the probe in a straight line, all the way to the thickest part of the bread. Hold it still and wait for a few seconds for the probe to heat up and register the correct temperature.

For breads that contain mostly wheat flour and water, 94–96°C/201–204.8°F is good. For those with a bit more sugar and/or fat in them, but still mostly white wheat flour, 96°C/204.8°F should do the trick. While for denser wholegrain breads or breads that contain a lot of whole seeds, 98°C/208°F or even a bit higher is needed.

If the bread is done, remove it from the oven, and if it isn't, then leave it in. But remember, the thermometer should confirm that you are right when you already think something is done, not be used intermittently throughout the baking process to tell you when something is done.

How to prepare a cake pan

There are many ways of preparing a cake pan. You can line them with baking (parchment) paper, grease them with butter or some other fat, or do both, plus you can also coat the inside with breadcrumbs. In this book almost all the recipes call for a buttered and breaded pan so that's the one I am going to focus on here. If a recipe calls for another type of preparation the method will have instructions on how to prepare it.

Common faults I see in buttered and breaded pans are mostly either that the inside is not entirely covered in butter, meaning the crumbs won't stick to the entire inside, or that people are using too much butter because they really want to make sure the cake doesn't stick. This, however, always leads to a too thick crust of breadcrumbs, and sometimes to the crumbs sliding down into the excess butter on the sides of the pan before the batter has gone in, leaving parts of the pan exposed. The cake batter will then stick to these parts of the pan.

I prefer to use soft, but not very soft butter. At room temperature is fine if your room is around 20°C/68°F plus or minus a couple of degrees. I never use a brush to apply the butter as I find that difficult. My preferred aid is in fact a square of paper towel. The pan should be at the same temperature as the butter, meaning room temperature. If it is warmer than the butter, it makes the butter softer and it thus becomes harder to coat the pan properly on application. If the pan is colder than the butter, the fat hardens a little on contact and rubs off from the soft lump on the towel onto the pan in a too thick layer.

When they are both the same temperature it's easy to apply a nice, thin coating everywhere. Make sure to get the butter into every corner and every angle of the pan. It's especially easy to miss the very deepest part of the angle between the bottom and the sides on both round and rectangular pans.

When you are done, take an extra look to find spots that don't glisten with butter. If you find some, re-apply butter locally. In addition, look for spots where the butter is too thick, in effect where you can't clearly see the material of the pan though a translucent film of fat. If you find spots like that, use the paper towel to remove or redistribute some of the butter.

When you are entirely satisfied with the coating of the pan, the time has come to add breadcrumbs. They should be plain, dried unsweetened wheat breadcrumbs if nothing else is indicated. It is very difficult to coat a pan really well without a decent amount of crumbs to swirl around in it. If you add too little it might look coated but end up not being coated enough in patches, which is irritating. In my opinion it takes 50 g/2 oz (½ cup) of breadcrumbs to perfectly coat a standard pan, but only 15 g/½ oz (2 tablespoons) of the quantity will actually stick to the pan itself, the rest can be reused next time. I suggest you keep a special box of breadcrumbs for coating where you can easily return the surplus without having to try to get them back into the packet from which they came, a packet that, at least in Sweden, has a very small hole. If you don't want to reuse your breadcrumbs you can always chuck them away, but that's a bit of a waste.

Pour the 50 g/2 oz (½ cup) of breadcrumbs into your perfectly buttered pan and start by coating the bottom. Do this by tilting the pan in different directions, creating a small tsunami of crumbs flushing across the pan. When the bottom is thoroughly coated, move on to the sides. Tilt the pan so that the angle between the bottom and the sides turn into a ditch where the crumbs can congregate. Now turn the pan around slowly one full lap while maintaining a tilt, which keeps the crumbs collected in one more tsunami, this time sweeping the sides of the pan. Make sure that you keep the pan on such an angle that a trickle of crumbs keeps falling over the edge and out of the pan as you turn it so that the top edge gets coated. It's a good idea to do this over a sink.

The pan should now be fully coated and you can scoop up the excess crumbs into that crumb-keeping box I mentioned before. Finish by turning the pan upside down over the sink and tap it once against the side of the sink. This will cause any excess crumbs to drop out. This technique works equally well with round and rectangular pans.

How to judge when a cake is done

It's not fun when a cake comes out dry, or unintentionally underbaked. However, it's easier to learn if a cake is done than it is with bread as there are several visual clues to look out for. The most important thing when baking cakes is to not open the oven door when the cake is not done as it might collapse and never fluff up again. Because the goal with a cake batter, as opposed to a bread dough, is to develop very little gluten giving that great, short, tender texture, cakes are more fragile before being cooked as they lack the stretchy flexible network of gluten threads of bread.

Following the timings in the method of the recipe is a good first step. At the same time you should be keeping an eye through the window of the oven. I have a look through the window when half the indicated time has passed to see that everything is looking somewhat like I would expect it to. Then I check it again three-quarters in, just for good measure. What to look for towards the end of the time indicated in the recipe is the edges of the cake starting to pull away from the side of the cake pan, because this is an indication of it being done. However, don't wait for the gap to increase to several millimetres all around the pan, because by then the cake will already be overbaked and dry. At the first sign of a gap developing, get your cake tester out and wait for another few minutes. Now carefully open the oven door without creating any sudden changes in temperature or atmospheric pressure by opening it fast. Once again, carefully insert the tester into the middle of the cake and pull it out immediately. It should look a little greasy from translucent fat and it can have some moist crumbs sticking to it, but it should not be wet with opaque raw batter. If the cake isn't done, carefully close the oven door (do not slam the door) and wait a little longer, perhaps another 5 minutes. If you didn't perform this check way too early, your cake will probably be just fine, but if you are unlucky the unbaked centre will sink a little. Don't be sad though, when this happens the cake will still be very tasty...

This method only applies to cakes that are supposed to be baked all the way through. There are examples of cakes throughout the book that should be underbaked and those recipes indicate exactly how long the cake should be baked for and what texture it should have when done.

Some people also take the temperature of their cake. While I think it works well with bread I don't think it quite makes sense with cake. If you put the probe in there and it comes out clean the cake is done and you don't really need to look at what temperature it is. If you are interested though, it should be somewhere around 95–96°C/203–205°F in the middle when baked through.

How to cool things down

There are many ways we can cool our baked goods down and they all contribute in different ways to the end result. It is clearly stated in each recipe which method is most suitable, but I thought I would expand a little bit on the matter and explain roughly which methods give which result.

For any bread or cake where we want a crusty, crunchy or crispy exterior, the rule of thumb is to allow it to cool with as much air circulating around it as possible. This is to vent away any moisture that might ruin the aforementioned texture. For any bread or cake where we want a soft or chewy exterior we will want somehow to prevent the surface from losing moisture during the cooling process. A recipe for hard flatbread will call for the baked breads to be spread out and allowed to cool and dry on a wire rack, while a recipe for soft flatbread will ask you to stack the breads to cool down and to wrap them up in plastic bags as soon as they reach room temperature. A loaf of bread where we want a crispy crust will cool down quickly on a wire rack, while one where a soft crust is desired might be rolled up in a clean dish towel or even a blanket to slowly cool. Loaves of bread and cakes baked in a pan should, if nothing else to the contrary is written in the recipe, always be taken out of the pan a few minutes after they are removed from the oven and left to cool on a wire rack. This is so that condensation doesn't form inside the pan making the crust not just soft but soggy. The pan, however, is perfect to keep the already cooled-down bread or cake in to prevent it from drying out.

Blind baking or pre-baking pie crusts

When do you need to pre-bake a pie crust and why? And how do you do it? Well, there are several reasons why this is sometimes important to do. First, is that some recipes, such as those with a very liquid filling, risk turning your unbaked pie crust into a floppy sheet of strange pasta-like substance if filling and crust are baked from raw together. Another reason is that the bottom can puff up and move the filling around, something that is prevented by pre-baking with pie weights. A third reason is that the edges of the pie, especially in shortcrust pastry with a high fat content, can slump a bit and fall down if not pre-baked with pie-weights. Then there are, of course, recipes where you pour an already cooked and done filling into a pre-baked crust with no intention of putting it in the oven. This is the only scenario where the crust should be baked all the way through and until it's nicely golden, which means that you might need to pre-bake it with weights and then remove them once the pastry has set, to colour the parts that were previously covered up.

If I bake a pie with, for example, fruits that are heavy on their own, like apples, I generally don't blind bake it, as I'm fine with the result not being perfectly straight looking. It will taste good anyway.

To blind bake, take your pie pan with the short pastry in it and place a piece of baking (parchment) paper over the top to cover. On the baking paper, place some kind of weight that can distribute itself in the pan to hold the bottom down at the same time as it supports the edges. There are special marble-like pie weights that you can buy, both ceramic and metal options, but dried peas or beans also work well. Make sure that the inevitable creases in the paper around the edges of the pan don't catch any of the dough, it will then become difficult to remove it. When the paper is perfectly positioned and the pie weights of your choice have been added, bake the crust at 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 until it just sets and is cooked through if you are going to bake it another time with the filling in. If it is going to be filled with a filling that is not going to be baked, remove the pie weights and paper and return it to the oven to brown evenly all over.

I have seen lots of discussions on what is the perfect pie weight. I say that it depends on the material of your pie pan. Metal conducts heat better (faster) than ceramics (porcelain or glass). If you use metal pie weights in a thick ceramic pie pan, it might be that it browns from the inside before the ceramic has even heated up and started cooking the exterior of the crust. If you are using a metal pie pan and ceramic weights it goes the other way around. I might be splitting hairs here, most pie crusts are thin enough to cook properly even if the heat is not evenly distributed between the exterior and interior, but I think that it's important to know this and if you have a choice you can make it, knowing that it might just turn what you are doing a little bit better. Even if no one but you will notice.

Egg wash

If you want a shiny and dark golden surface on something you are about to bake, or if you want a handy glue for little decorations, such as pearl sugar or poppy seeds to make them stick to the surface of something, then egg wash is a common option. However, there are some pitfalls, and it's not quite as simple as just cracking an egg and brushing away. Often I find that people apply too much egg wash so that it runs over the side and sets at the base of what they bake, creating an unpleasant collar of plastic-like solidified egg. Or their egg wash is too thick or lumpy so you get an uneven thick layer of dark varnish on top of what you bake.

I find that the best way of making egg wash is to crack an egg into what might seem an unnecessarily large bowl, before adding about half a quantity (the egg is one quantity) of milk. The easiest way of doing this is simply to measure the milk using one half of the eggshell. It's not very precise but it doesn't need to be. The next step is very important, and the reason for the large bowl. Whisk the egg and milk mixture for a few minutes, making sure that the mix is completely smooth and has no lumps at all. It will foam a bit but if you leave the mix to rest for a few minutes before using it, this will disappear. Most people crack the egg into a cup and add liquid before whisking around with a brush or some piece of cutlery. This leads to lumpy and uneven egg wash.

Apply your egg wash in a thin layer using a good pastry brush. One coating is enough, it just needs to glisten from egg to brown well, it doesn't need to be soaking wet. For all leavened doughs, they need to be baked when the egg wash has just been applied and is still wet. If it dries up it will crack in the baking process.

If, however, you want to create a very dark and shiny coat, perhaps for a pie or something else that doesn't leaven, substitute the milk with cream and brush whatever you are baking with several layers of egg wash allowing it to dry to the touch between each layer.

The use of spices in The Nordic Baking Book

For many people who cook at home (and most professionals too) it makes sense to use a pepper grinder to grind your black pepper fresh. In fact, I would venture a guess and say that the vast majority of homes inhabited by people who will buy this book will definitely grind their pepper fresh. With baking, most people seem to care quite a bit less and packets of pre-ground sweet spices of various kinds are found in most home kitchens. This would be fine if they were always fresh (as in freshly opened) when used, but as sure as I am that many of you grind your black pepper fresh, I am equally sure that many of you have old dusty packets of ground cardamom, cinnamon or nutmeg sitting around; packets that have been open forever and which you might be tempted to use when a recipe in this book calls for that particular spice. Resist. Grind your spices fresh instead – it will be so much better.

All ground spices in this book, with the exception of cinnamon and saffron, are ground fresh using a mortar and pestle and then used immediately. All spices are measured after being ground. I buy pre-ground cinnamon when the recipes calls for ground as I have yet to discover a domestic grinder that can produce the fine fibre-free powder we all want.

Saffron is the other exception to my rule of thumb, as I buy pre-ground saffron in sachets of 0.5 g/1⁄16 oz. This is much better than using saffron threads; something I have understood is quite common. There are many problems with using saffron threads. One is that you can never be sure exactly how much saffron you are adding since all the threads will be slightly different from each other in size, and weighing out the tiny amounts needed requires a scale that serves little purpose in a home other than weighing saffron (unless you are also some kind of drug lord or pharmacist). Secondly, to extract the full potential in colour and aroma from saffron you are going to want to grind the saffron threads anyhow. It is impossible to do this in a mortar and pestle as most of it would stick to the inside of the bowl, once again making it very difficult to know how much you are actually adding to the recipe. It will also discolour the mortar and everything else you intend to grind in it for a long time to come.

I have thought a lot about it and I think that the only way to grind saffron at home in any way that equates to what you get in those little sachets, is to use a glass plate and glass marble of the kind used by artists to grind their own colour pigments. But then, I would rather just buy the perfectly ground, perfectly measured-out sachets of saffron instead.

Gelatine

Gelatine is a gelling agent most commonly derived from pig's skin, but sometimes also from beef cartilage or other animal parts rich in a protein called collagen. Gelatine, in rare circumstances and in some parts of the world, can even be made from fish. This is mostly seen when religious reasons prohibit the use of other animals. Gelatine is produced by hydrolyzing the raw material in water and then refining it until only peptides and proteins remain before drying it.

Gelatine is, for most food applications, a superior gelling agent simply because the resulting gel (if not too hard to begin with) melts at body temperature (37°C/98.6°F). This means that jellies, creams and mousses stabilized with gelatine will be perceived as being very delicate as they melt in your mouth. Gelatine can be substituted with plant-based gelling agents like agar, but it is difficult to achieve exactly the same texture because most of the plant-based gelling agents tend to have a much higher melting point. Agar also doesn't work in many recipes as it needs to boil to start gelling, while gelatine just needs to be melted to liquefy and will happily gel again as you cool it.

All gelatine used in this book, unless otherwise specified, is gelatine leaf, each leaf weighing 1.9 g/0.07 oz. Gelatine leaves may vary marginally in size across the world but my experience is that a leaf of gelatine in one country pretty much translates to a leaf of gelatine in another country. Perhaps, just to be sure, cast a glance at the back of your packet and make sure it's about the same weight as mine. Gelatine leaf needs to be rehydrated before it can be used. It is important to do this the right way. If the water is too warm the leaf can start to melt and if it's soaked for too long it will absorb unnecessary amounts of water thereby diluting both the flavour and texture of your recipe.

Gelatine leaf should be soaked in very cold water. I soak mine for 5 minutes. If you are using more than one leaf, it's important to place them in the water one by one and not in a stack, or they might stick together and not soak properly, leaving hard bits that won't melt. After soaking the gelatine leaves, squeeze any excess water out using your hand, then place them in a small pot over a low heat and stir using a rubber spatula letting the gelatine melt completely. This doesn't take long and the gelatine should not get hot, just warm. Always use the melted gelatine immediately otherwise it will set again as it cools down.

It is in most cases not possible to substitute gelatine leaf in the recipes within this book with powdered gelatine. Substitution with powder can only happen when the gelatine is going to be dissolved into a warm liquid. This is because gelatine powder can't be soaked in water and then melted.

Tempering chocolate

In some recipes where chocolate is used, it calls for the chocolate to be tempered. Tempering chocolate is a process that makes chocolate shiny when it hardens and creates the typical texture of chocolate that sort of snaps when it's broken. When you buy chocolate it is already tempered but when you melt it this is ruined and will have to be done again to create a shine and snap as opposed to it being dull and mottled and crumbly or soft.

Cocoa butter can crystallize in six different kinds of crystals, all with different properties.

1 has a melting temperature of 17°C/62.6°F

2 has a melting temperature of 21°C/69.8°F

3 has a melting temperature of 26°C/78.8°F

4 has a melting temperature of 28°C/82.4°F

5 has a melting temperature of 34°C/93.2°F

6 has a melting temperature of 36°C/96.8°F

The first four types of crystals are too soft in texture and melt too easily, meaning that chocolate with these kinds of crystals will not have a nice texture and will melt very quickly if you pick it up with your hand.

The fifth type is the most desirable one as it melts just under body temperature (37°C/98.6°F), meaning it will melt in your mouth but not when you pick it up with your hand for a few seconds to bring it to your mouth. It also makes the chocolate look beautiful and shiny.

The sixth crystal doesn't form as quickly as the others but rather after several weeks of the chocolate sitting at a stable temperature. It also has a slightly too high melting point to be pleasant to eat. You can feel the difference in industrial chocolate that has been sitting on the shelf for a while, as it has a soapy texture to it that takes a bit too long to deliciously melt in your mouth. This can come from the formation of crystal number six.

The process of tempering chocolate is all about creating as much of crystal number five and as little as possible of the other ones.

First, chocolate is melted and heated to about 45°C/113°F to dissolve all pre-existing crystals. It is subsequently cooled down to 27°C/80.6°F which will allow for crystals of type four and five to form. Now the chocolate is stirred and mixed to create a lot of small crystals and to disperse them evenly within the chocolate. This part of the process is called 'seeding' because the small pieces of crystals created act as seeds around which more crystals of the same type are encouraged to form. After this the chocolate is once again heated very carefully to 31°C/87.8°F, which means that all of the crystal seeds of type four will melt and deactivate leaving the vast majority of crystals still in the chocolate being the desirable crystal number five.

The chocolate can now be used.

Tempering chocolate is a really complicated craft and not something you'll learn just from reading this. But it's worth trying, and I am sure you will find the process fascinating and you will notice a difference in the texture even if you might not achieve a perfect temper the first time.

For more instructions on how to actually do this, I recommend looking at some videos online. There are thousands of amazing pastry chefs practising this craft out there, and watching a few will be very inspiring and informative especially after reading this text and understanding the technicalities as to why tempering works.

How to melt chocolate

You have to be a little careful when you melt chocolate. There are two main things to look out for: the first is to not get water in the chocolate and the second is to not let it get too hot, both of which will ruin the chocolate.

Many books, by default it seems, describe an unnecessarily complicated way of melting chocolate. They often instruct the reader to heat water in a pot on the stove and then melt the chocolate in a heatproof bowl over that pot. With modern electric stoves (especially induction ones) and microwave ovens too for that matter, melting chocolate is

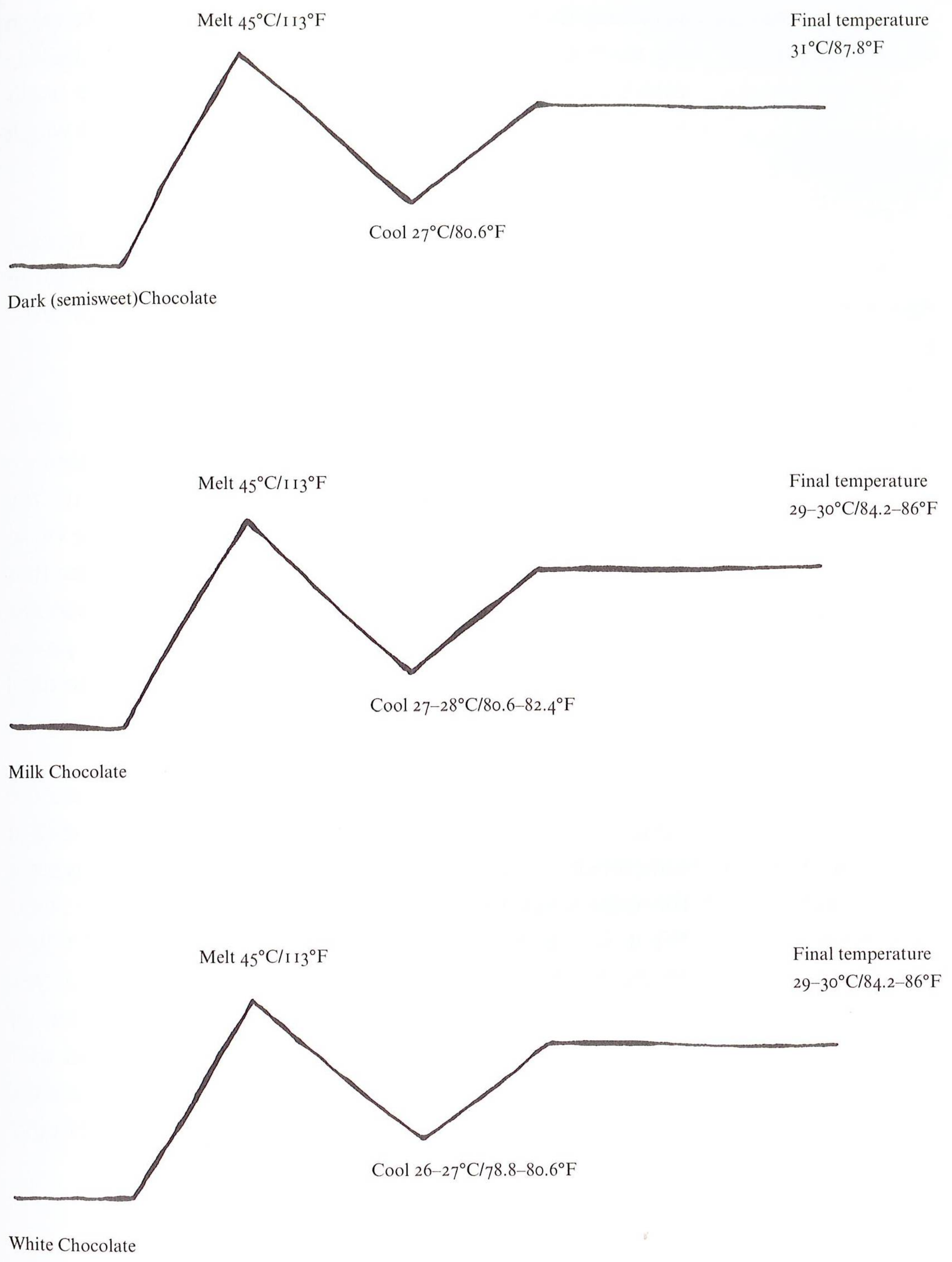

Melt 45°C/113°F
Final temperature 31°C/87.8°F
Cool 27°C/80.6°F
Dark (semisweet)Chocolate
Melt 45°C/113°F
Final temperature 29–30°C/84.2–86°F
Cool 27–28°C/80.6–82.4°F
Milk Chocolate
Melt 45°C/113°F
Final temperature 29–30°C/84.2–86°F
Cool 26–27°C/78.8–80.6°F
White Chocolate

Diagram showing the required temperatures for melting, cooling and heating different types of chocolate during the tempering process.

very easy to do without the water bath. There is less to clean up, no risk of humidity from the water bath finding its way into the chocolate and it is about twice as fast as the traditional method. To me, there is no question at all as to which one to choose.

I imagine that the idea of the water bath being a necessity comes from a time when electric stoves where difficult to quickly regulate in temperature and when many people used stoves with open gas burners.

Anyhow, to melt chocolate, set your stove at a low power setting, use a heavy-bottomed pan, break the chocolate into pieces and add it to the pan and stir constantly until the chocolate has melted. Continue stirring for a minute or so after you have taken the pot off the stove to make sure that any residual heat in the metal doesn't burn the chocolate. Or, if you are using a microwave oven, set it to a low power setting and open the door to stir every 30 seconds or so until the chocolate has melted.

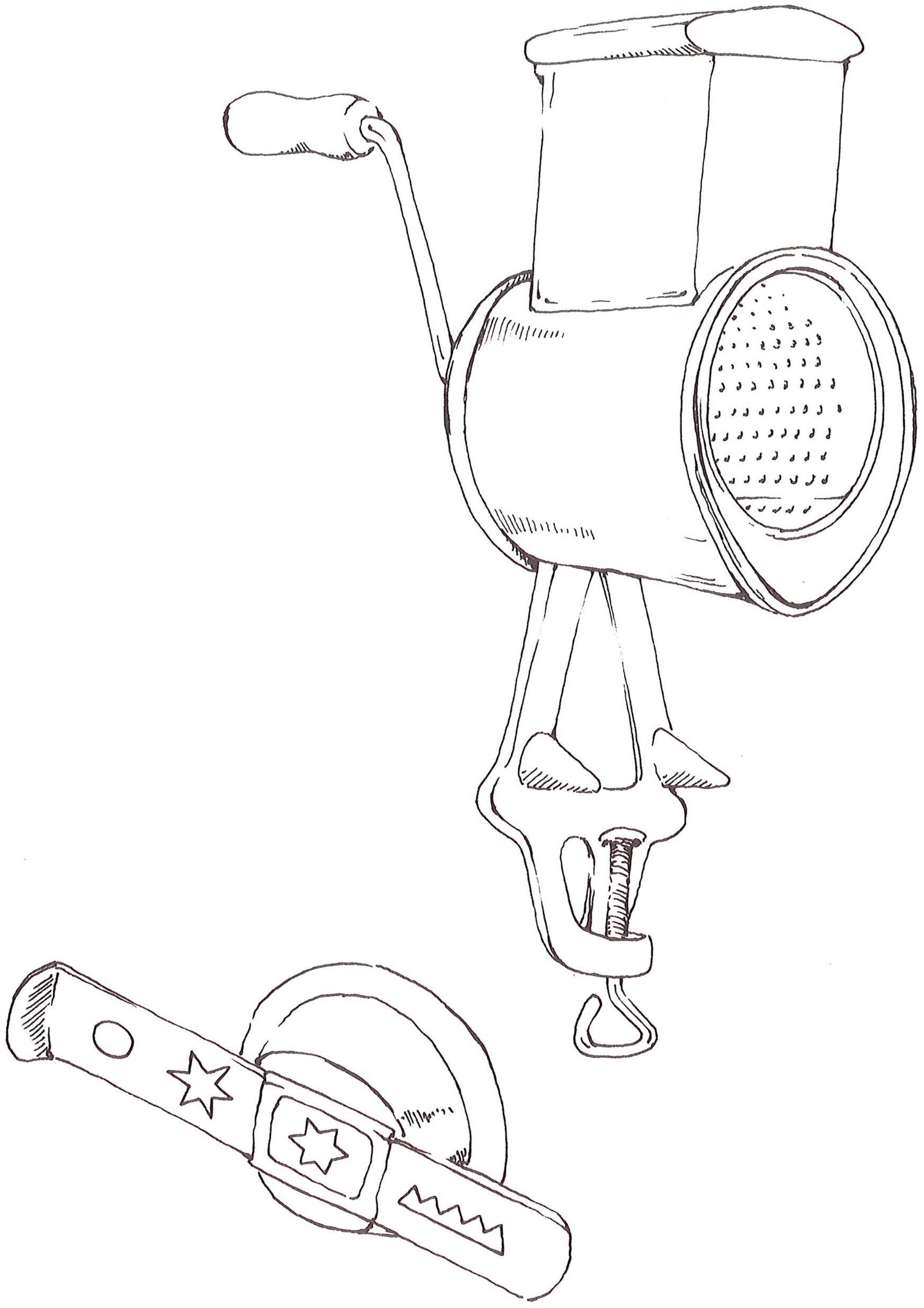
If you have a stove with open gas burners, you can do the same thing if you are very careful and stir all the time. But remember that the flame of an open gas burner always has the same temperature regardless of the setting of the stove. What you regulate by increasing or decreasing the flow of gas is the size of the flame. With an electric stove you actually regulate how hot the stove gets (or in the case of induction how much energy it transmits) meaning that with gas you can easily burn the chocolate in the spot where the flames touches the metal of the pan even at a low setting if you are not careful.

If you are melting a lot of chocolate on an open gas burner stove and don't have a microwave oven you might want to consider using a water bath after all.

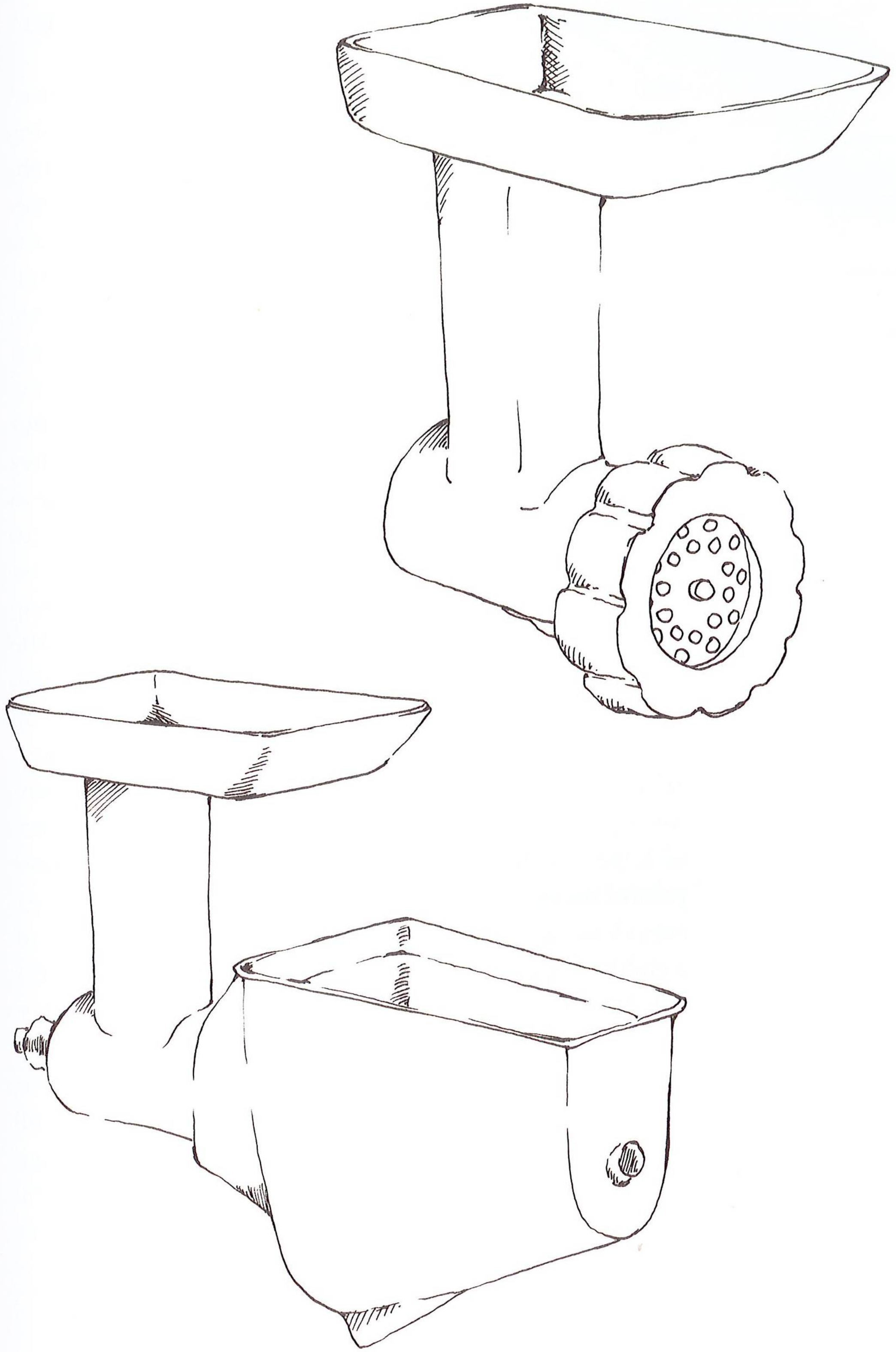
The benefit of a stand mixer

In this book we often refer to the use of a stand mixer with some kind of attachment. The reason for this is simple. It is a practical and functional multi-use tool that is found in, if not most homes, at least many. Often we would use it fitted with the dough hook for kneading dough (which I have written more about on page 56) but almost equally often it is used for whipping things with the whisk attachment, or for mixing things with the paddle attachment. The great thing with most stand mixers is that you can attach a huge variety of tools to them, like meat grinders, fruit strainers, ice cream makers, cookie extruders and pasta rollers. The grinder can also be used for cookie dough and if you fit a cookie extruder to it, the dough will be pressed out into your chosen shape, for example a star.

If I were to pick only one more tool in addition to the first three I mentioned – which are always included with the machine – it would be the nut grinder. It makes a huge difference for both texture and aroma to grind, for example, your almond flour yourself as opposed to buying the dry sawdust in a bag that is available in shops. Manual nut grinders work well too. If I were to pick two extra attachments, the second one would be the fruit strainer, just because I love making preserves and this simple gadget makes it both easier and better at the same time.



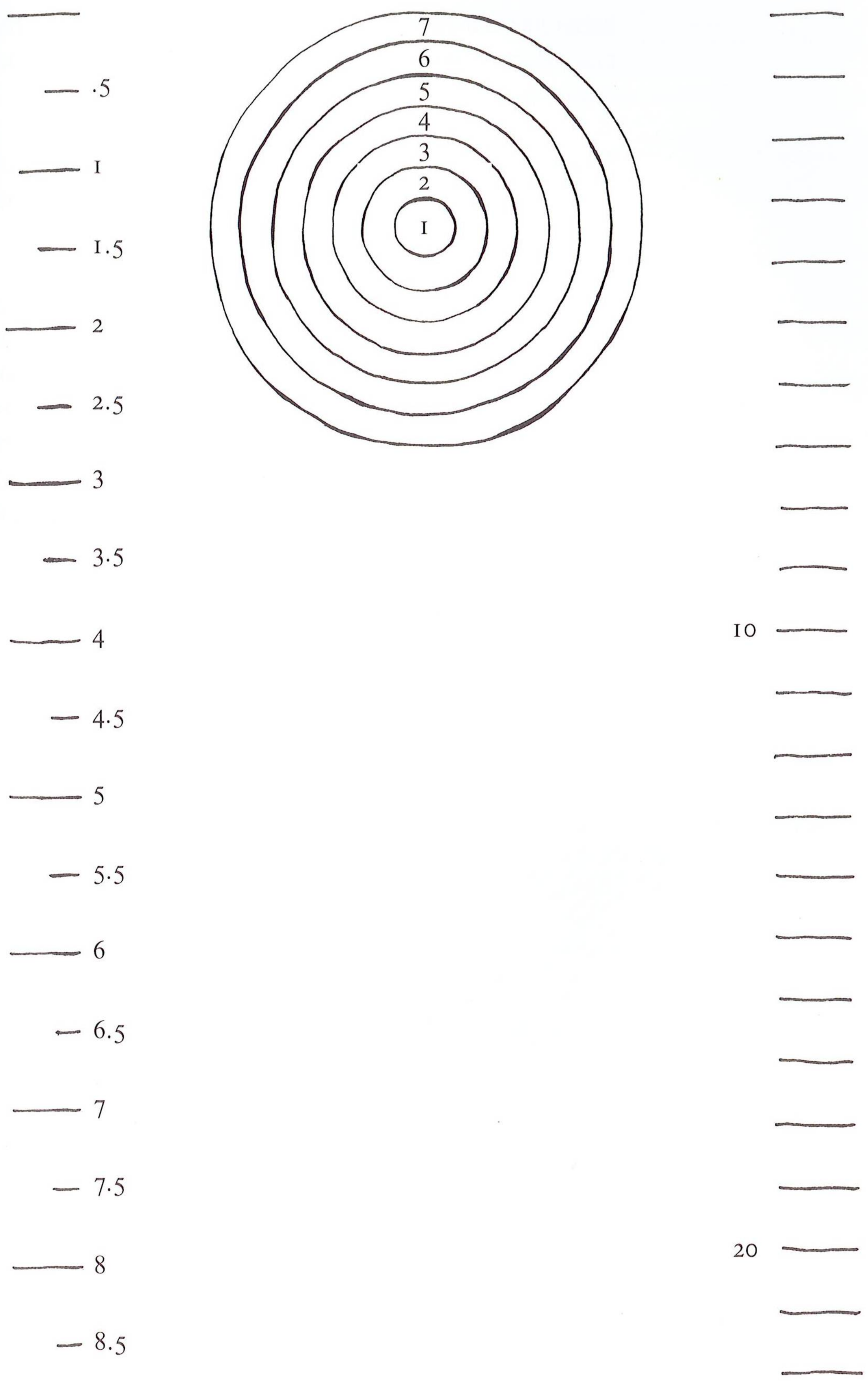
Top to bottom: manual nut grinder and cookie extruder attachment



Top to bottom: stand mixer grinder attachment and strainer attachment

Why have we included this weird drawing of rulers and rings?

Well. Is there anything more annoying when baking than when someone has written a recipe saying that something should be made into a ball with a diameter of x cm/x inches, or into a log that is x cm/x inches long, or into something that should be x cm/x inches thick and you don't know whether what you are doing is quite right? You feel a mounting dread and perhaps you feel that to be relatively certain of success, you really should get a ruler to confirm what you think is the right size of whatever item you are making. You stand there in a moment of hesitance, flour on your hands. You touch your forehead like people do when they think and now you have flour there too, and some sugar in your hair I think. You decide to go to your home office to find that ruler you know is in there somewhere, or at least it was when you used it last: nine years ago. Rummaging through box after box, drawer after drawer, leaving a little trace of butter and crumbs throughout the paper trail which is your life. Where is that damned ruler? Ahhh, maybe in one of the kids rooms! They always 'borrow' your stationary don't they? You go there and the first thing that happens when you step though the door is that you step on a piece of Lego, which is, as we all know, easily among the 10 most painful things that can happen to a human being. Through eyes clouded by tears you see the ruler sitting on the top of a child-sized desk, or at least half of the ruler. You see, the kids have been using the flex of the good old-fashioned plastic ruler to fling little marbles across the yard until the ruler couldn't take it anymore. The second half is nowhere to be found. You return to the kitchen, half ruler in one hand, still limping from your foot injury. The ruler is not long enough to measure out what you wanted with only the first half still around. This, however, doesn't matter as the butter in your



batter has melted in the gentle heat of summer and you have made uncooked cookie soup instead of whatever you where meaning to bake.

To avoid all this, we have provided you in print with the various ways of measuring that you will need to execute most recipes in this book.

You can also use the diameter rings to trace onto baking (parchment) paper so that you know exactly how large each item of something should be and where they should sit. It is printed in the blackest of blacks and shines through a standard parchment paper very well. Remember to turn the paper over before you place any food on it though so that the ink you have used doesn't colour the food you later place on it.

BREADS BASED ON WHEAT FLOUR

Previous page: View from Hörte Brygga, Sweden, spring 2018.

Wheat is both the most common and easily the most versatile of the grains used in Nordic baking and in most Western food cultures. It's amazing really when you think about how many expressions of food a single product like wheat flour can produce. From the softest of sweet buns to the most minerally acidic tasting and crusty loaves of sourdough bread, and from crumbly and fragile shortbreads and cookies all the way through to fluffy sponge cakes and on to the other end of the texture spectrum with dense, gooey chocolate cakes.

This book contains more than 450 recipes, of which a significant number contain wheat flour in some form. When you think about this and you realize how big a part of Western food culture wheat really is, it's impossible not to also think about those who are allergic to gluten.

The Nordic Baking Book does not contain substitutions in each recipe for those who can't eat wheat, or for any other product either for that matter. The reason for this is primarily that supplying this information in every recipe would take up too much space and push many essential recipes out of the book altogether. This, however, does not mean that I think the recipes are holy and cannot be changed to accommodate, for example, food allergies. On the contrary, as I have said many times in this book and elsewhere, food is the most important expression of human culture, simply because all of us need to eat. Food culture does not always correspond with our romanticized ideas of it but is always a reflection of what we actually cook and eat. Food culture cannot be preserved in a bubble and old is not always better than new. I would rather see people change a recipe by updating it to suit their needs and use it, rather than them ignoring it as an outdated relic and not using it at all.

Adapt the recipes so that they work for you, whether it is because you just want to or for medical reasons. There are many excellent sources out there on how to best adapt recipes to make them gluten free. My advice is to use them. Another general piece of advice though, after having tried some gluten-free substitution products myself, is to remember that they all work well for certain things and less well for others. Generally speaking, I have found that anything that is going to be leavened with yeast is harder to get to work without wheat flour and things with a short, crumbly texture are easier.

PLAIN WHEAT LOAF

Loff (Norway)
Vehnäleipä / Ranskanleipä (Finland)
Franskbrød (Denmark)
Vitt bröd / Franskbröd (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Rising time: 55 minutes
Makes: 2 free-form loaves or 3 loaves made in loaf pans

- 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) milk or water
- 50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
- 10 g/¼ oz (2 teaspoons) salt
- 50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter, at room temperature, plus extra to grease if using
- 750 g/1 lb 10 oz (5½ cups) strong wheat flour

Pour the liquid into the bowl of a stand mixer and dissolve the yeast into it. Add the salt, butter and flour. Work everything together with the dough hook for 10–12 minutes at a rather high speed until very shiny and elastic.

Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave the dough to rise for about 35 minutes, or until it has doubled in size.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper or butter three 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pans.

Place the dough on a lightly floured work counter and divide it in half if you are making free-form loaves or into 3 if you are fitting it into loaf pans. Shape them nicely and then, if you are making free-form loaves, place each one on a prepared baking sheet. If, however, you are baking your dough in loaf pans, place them in the buttered pans.

Cover the shaped dough with a clean dish towel again and leave to rise for another 20 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Bake the loaves for 20–25 minutes, or until cooked through and nicely golden. Leave the loaves to cool completely on wire racks before you cut into them.

WHEAT LOAF WITH POPPY SEEDS

Barkis / Bergis (Sweden)

In Sweden, *barkis* (from Stockholm) or *bergis* (from Gothenburg) refers to a loaf of white milk-bread that is covered in poppy seeds before being baked. The bread has its roots in the traditional Jewish bread, challah, eaten on the Sabbath, and the word itself comes from the Yiddish word, *berakhot*. The Swedified version does not contain the eggs of the original, nor has it the traditional braided appearance.

White loaf with poppy seeds is available over the whole country as a commercially baked product, but is not commonly referred to as *barkis* or *bergis* outside Stockholm, Gothenburg and Norrköping, the three cities in which Jewish immigrants were first allowed to settle and to construct synagogues, following an order from parliament and the Swedish king on May 27th 1782.

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Makes: 2 free-form loaves

- 1 quantity Plain Wheat Loaf dough (see left), in which half of the water has been substituted with milk
- Egg Wash (pages 73–4)
- 30 g/1 oz (3 tablespoons) poppy seeds

Make the plain wheat loaf (see left), but substitute half of the water with milk.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Whisk the egg and milk together to make an egg wash. Brush the leavened loaves lightly with the egg wash then sprinkle with a dense layer of poppy seeds. Bake the shaped dough for 20–25 minutes or until cooked through and nicely golden. Leave to cool on wire racks.

For image see page 103

WORT LOAF

Vörtbröd (Sweden)

This dark loaf, sweetened with wort (the liquid from which beer is brewed) and flavoured with plenty of sweet spices, is considered essential by many southern Swedes at Christmas dinner and it is the bread of choice for dipping in ham broth, which is often served too as part of the aforementioned dinner.

To make this loaf, you need a wort for making a beer at 8% alcohol, as a weaker wort won't be sweet enough and you will need to sweeten it with some malt extract (mixed in a little water).

Some people add raisins to their wort loaf; I am not a huge fan of this, but feel free to add them to the recipe if you like. If so, add a good handful towards the end of the kneading process so that they don't break up too much but still get fully incorporated.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Rising time: 35–45 minutes
Makes: 4 loaves

- 1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) strong, dark brewer's wort, plus 50 ml/2 fl oz (3½ tablespoons) extra for brushing the loaves
- 100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, melted
- 200 g/7 oz (½ cup plus 1 tablespoon) golden syrup
- 40 g/1½ oz (2 tablespoons) salt
- 1 tablespoon ground fennel seeds
- ½ tablespoon ground aniseed
- ½ tablespoon grated bitter orange peel
- ½ tablespoon ground cloves
- ½ tablespoon ground cardamom
- ½ tablespoon grated dried ginger
- 25 g/1 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
- 2 kg/4½ lb (14¾ cups) Swedish rye/strong wheat flour (*rågsikt*), sifted or 1.2 kg/2½ lb (8¾ cups plus 1 tablespoon) strong wheat flour, and 800 g/1¾ lb (5 cups plus 2 tablespoons) rye flour
- 500 g/1 lb 2 oz (3⅔ cups) strong wheat flour

Combine the wort, butter, golden syrup, salt and spices in a large pot and warm over a low heat until it is body temperature (37°C/98.6°F). Add the yeast to the mixture, stir until dissolved and pour it into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook. Add both the flours and start to knead the dough at a low speed until everything is incorporated. Increase the speed to medium and work the dough until it is smooth, shiny and elastic. It should take 5–10 minutes, depending on how powerful your mixer is.

Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave the dough at warm room temperature to double in size. It should be relatively quick, 15–25 minutes, as the dough at this stage is fairly warm and the yeast is very active.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Place the dough on a lightly floured work counter and divide it into 4 equal pieces. Shape each piece into an elongated loaf and arrange them in pairs on the prepared baking sheets. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for another 20 minutes, or until doubled in size again.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6.

Bake for 40 minutes. During the last 10 minutes of the baking, open the oven door and lightly brush the surface of the loaves with the extra wort. Repeat this at least twice to produce a dark and shiny surface. Allow the loaves to cool completely on wire racks before slicing.

For image see page 103

NORWEGIAN VERSION OF WORT LOAF

Julevørterbrød (Norway)

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Rising time: 3 hours
Makes: 2 big loaves

75 g/2¾ oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
175 g/6 oz (½ cup) golden syrup
90 g/3¼ oz (6 tablespoons) sugar
15 g/½ oz (1 tablespoon) salt
2 tablespoons ground aniseed
1 tablespoon ground cloves
½ tablespoon grated bitter orange peel
350 g/12 oz (3 cups) rye flour
650 g/1 lb 7 oz (4¾ cups plus 2 tablespoons) strong wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
300 g/11 oz (2 cups) raisins
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)

Dissolve the yeast in some of the 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) body temperature (37°C/98.6°F) water in a bowl of a stand mixer. Add the rest of the water, the syrup, sugar, salt, spices, grated peel, rye flour and half of the wheat flour and knead with the dough hook at low speed until mixed. Increase the speed and work for 10 minutes. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 1 hour, or until doubled in size.

Place the dough on a floured work counter and add the raisins and more of the wheat flour. Knead by hand until everything is incorporated. The dough should be quite firm. You might not need to use all of the wheat flour. Put the dough back into the bowl, cover and leave to rise for another hour.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Place the dough on the work counter, divide in half and shape into loaves. Place on the prepared baking sheets and leave the loaves to rise for 1 hour, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Coat the loaves with the beaten egg. Bake for 30 minutes, then lower the temperature to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4. Bake for 10–15 minutes. The loaves will get really dark on the outside but they should burn.

NORWEGIAN WHOLEMEAL LOAF

Kneippbrød (Norway)

The Norwegians eat the most bread per capita in Europe, and *kneippbrød* is the most eaten bread in Norway. *Kneipp*, which is named after the Bavarian priest and hydrotherapist Sebastian Kneipp, was originally brought to the country by Norwegian publisher Søren Mittet in 1895 after a visit to Germany. Mr Mittet was allegedly licensed by the priest/therapist himself to manufacture the bread, which has over the years grown immensely popular and is today baked by almost every bakery. Every year Norwegians eat more than 60 million loaves of it, most often with toppings as a sandwich.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 2 loaves

700 ml/24 fl oz (2¾ cups plus 1 tablespoon) milk, at body temperature (37°C/98.6°F)
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
10 g/¼ oz (2 teaspoons) salt
1 kg/2¼ lb (8⅓ cups) wholemeal (whole-wheat) flour, plus extra for dusting
3 tablespoons neutral cooking oil
butter, to grease

Pour the milk into the bowl of a stand mixer, then add the yeast and stir until dissolved. Add the salt, flour and oil and work with the dough hook for 5 minutes, or until the dough is smooth and elastic. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Lightly butter two 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pans. Tip the dough out onto a very lightly floured work counter, divide it in half and shape into 2 loaves. Place these into the prepared loaf pans and leave to rise for another 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Bake the loaves for 50–60 minutes. Allow the loaves to sit for a few minutes before removing them from the pans and leaving them to cool completely on wire racks.

Clockwise from top left: Golden Syrup Loaf (page 104); Danish Birthday Buns (page 118); Icelandic Potato Bread (page 106); Wheat Loaf with Poppy Seeds (page 100); Overnight Breakfast Buns (page 116); Wort Loaf (page 101)

GOLDEN SYRUP LOAF

Sirapslimpa (Sweden)

Enjoy sliced and buttered with hard cheese and a glass of ice-cold chocolate milk on the side. At least that's how I ate it as a kid – although it was the commercially made kind, not homemade.

The flavourings may vary: it often contains fennel, aniseed and/or caraway, but sometimes no spices at all.

Preparation and cooking time: 1¼ hours
Rising time: 2 hours
Makes: 2 loaves

500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) milk
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter, plus extra to grease the loaf pans, if using
150 g/5 oz (⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons) golden syrup, plus extra for brushing
25 g/1 oz (1½ tablespoons) fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
450 g/1 lb (3⅓ cups) strong wheat flour
350 g/12 oz (2½ cups) Swedish rye/strong wheat flour (*rågsikt*), sifted or 210 g/7¼ oz (1½ cups) strong wheat flour and 140 g/4¾ oz (1 cup plus 1 tablespoon) rye flour
12 g/½ oz (2½ teaspoons) salt
1 tablespoon fennel seeds, crushed
1 tablespoon aniseed, crushed
1 tablespoon caraway seeds, crushed

Combine the milk, butter and golden syrup in a pan and heat gently until the butter and syrup melt. Remove from the heat and leave to cool to room temperature.

Dissolve the yeast in the milk and butter mixture. Pour the liquid into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook. Add the rest of the ingredients and knead at medium speed until shiny, smooth and very elastic. It should take a good 10 minutes. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave the dough to rise for about 1½ hours, or until doubled in size.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper or butter two 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pans.

Tip the dough onto a lightly floured work counter and divide it in half. Shape into 2 loaves and lift onto the baking sheets or place into the prepared pans. Cover the loaves with a clean dish towel and leave for another 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Bake the loaves until they are quite dark. Remove from the oven and, while they are still hot, brush the top surface of the loaves with syrup. Leave to cool on wire racks. If you used loaf pans, turn them out of the pans before brushing them with the syrup.

For image see page 103

BUTTERMILK LOAF

Piimälimppu (Finland)
Kärnmjölkslimpa (Sweden)

Prepare and bake exactly as in the Golden Syrup Loaf recipe (see left) but substitute the milk with buttermilk or another liquid cultured milk product and omit the brushing with golden syrup after the baking.

POMERANS LOAF

Pomeranslimpa (Sweden)

Prepare and bake exactly as in the Golden Syrup Loaf recipe (see left) but substitute the fennel, aniseed and/or caraway seeds with a good chunk of dried bitter orange peel, ground to a powder. Add it to the pan when you are heating the milk, butter and syrup.

POTATO LOAF BASED ON RYE AND WHEAT FLOUR

Potetbrød (Norway)
Potatisbröd / Potatislimpa (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 2 loaves

50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
140 g/4¾ oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) golden syrup
250 g/9 oz floury potatoes, boiled, peeled, pushed through a ricer and cooled to room temperature
15 g/½ oz (1 tablespoon) salt
375 g/13¼ oz (2¾ cups) Swedish rye/strong wheat flour (*rågsikt*), sifted or 225 g/8 oz (1½ cups plus 2 tablespons) strong wheat flour and 150 g/5 oz (1 cup plus 2 tablespoons) rye flour
450 g/1 lb (3¾ cups) strong wheat flour, plus extra for dusting

Dissolve the yeast in 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) body temperature (37°C/98.6°F) water in the bowl of a stand mixer. Add the syrup, potatoes, salt, rye and wheat flour mix and almost all the wheat flour and work the dough with the dough hook for 10 minutes, starting at low speed and increasing to medium. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes., or until doubled in size.

Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and divide it in half. Roll each piece to 1 cm/½ inch thickness and a rectangular shape. Then roll from the long side until it is a log. Put on a baking sheet and leave to rise for 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Using a sharp knife, make some cuts, 5 cm/2 inches long but not too deep, on the top of the loaves. Bake for 30 minutes, then leave the loaves to cool on wire racks.

POTATO LOAF BASED ON WHEAT FLOUR

Potatisbröd med vetemjöl (Sweden)

This version based on wheat flour sometimes also appears as smaller individual buns. This amount is enough for about 20 individual buns. If you decide to make buns then increase the oven temperature to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7 and cook for 8 minutes. This version also has a much larger portion of potatoes in it and won't leaven as much as the first one.

Preparation and cooking time: 1¼ hours
Rising time: 1¼ hours
Makes: 2 loaves or 20 buns

50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) milk
1 kg/2¼ lb floury potatoes, boiled, peeled, pushed through a ricer and cooled to room temperature
250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) neutral cooking oil
15 g/½ oz (1 tablespoon) salt
700 g/1 lb 8½ oz (5¾ cups plus 2 tablespoons) plain (all-purpose) flour, plus extra for dusting

Dissolve the yeast in the milk in the bowl of a stand mixer. Add all the other ingredients and work with the dough hook until the dough holds together. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for about 45 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and divide it in half. Shape each portion into a round, slightly flat loaf, then place them on the prepared baking sheets. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for about 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Bake the loaves for 45 minutes, then leave to cool on wire racks.

POTATO LOAF BASED ON COARSE RYE FLOUR AND WHEAT FLOUR

Potatisbröd med råg (Sweden)

These days breads with a portion of added potatoes are mostly made for their delicious, dense texture and flavour, or perhaps as a clever way of making use of leftover boiled potatoes (think banana bread but Nordic). It is easy, however, to imagine that adding potatoes historically was another way of making the grain harvest last longer in years of failing crops. Much like with pine bark (page 136) or lichen (page 549).

Preparation and cooking time: 1¼ hours
Resting time: overnight
Rising time: 1½ hours
Makes: 2 flat loaves

Day 1
230 g/8 oz (1¾ cups) coarse rye flour

Day 2
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
250 g/9 oz floury potatoes boiled, peeled, riced and cooled to room temperature
15 g/½ oz (1 tablespoon) salt
70 g/2¾ oz (3½ tablespoons) golden syrup
700 g/1 lb 8½ oz (5¾ cups plus 2 tablespoons) strong wheat flour, plus extra for dusting

Day 1
Bring 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) water to the boil. While it's heating up measure the rye flour into a heatproof bowl. Pour the boiling water over the flour and stir well with a wooden spoon. Cover with clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave to rest until the next day.

Day 2
Dissolve the yeast into 100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) cold water and add the mixture to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook. Add all of the remaining ingredients plus the scalded rye flour from the day before and work until the dough is smooth and holds together well. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 1 hour, or until doubled in size.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and divide it in half. Shape each piece into a round, slightly flat loaf and place on the prepared baking sheets. Prick the loaves with a fork, cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Bake the loaves for 45 minutes, then leave to cool on wire racks covered with a clean dish towel so that the crust remains soft.

ICELANDIC POTATO BREAD

Kartöflubrauð (Iceland)

Preparation and cooking time: 1¼ hours
Rising time: 2 hours
Makes: 1 loaf

10 g/¼ oz (2 teaspoons) fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) milk, lukewarm
400 g/14 oz floury potatoes, boiled, peeled, riced and cooled to room temperature
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (3⅔ cups) strong wheat flour
10 g/¼ oz (2 teaspoons) salt
butter, to grease
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)

Dissolve the yeast in the milk in a large mixing bowl. Add all the other ingredients and work the dough until shiny and smooth. Leave to rise for about 1 hour, or until doubled in size.

Lightly butter a 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan. Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and shape it into an oval. Place it in the prepared loaf pan and leave to rise again for about 1 hour, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4. Brush the loaf lightly with the egg wash and bake for 45 minutes. Leave for a few minutes, then turn out of the pan and leave to cool on a wire rack.

For image see page 103

OAT PORRIDGE LOAF

Grötbröd (Sweden)
Havrebrød (Norway)

Breads like this, which have porridge in them, were very popular when I grew up in the 1980s. You don't see them very often these days, which is a pity as they are deliciously dense and flavourful. They also keep a lot longer than breads without porridge as a base.

If you ever end up making too much breakfast porridge of some kind, not just with oats, and the quantity seems to correspond roughly with step 1 of the recipe below, use that instead of what's below. If you only have half, make 1 loaf.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Rising time: 80 minutes
Makes: 2 loaves

Step 1
300 g/11 oz (3 cups) rolled oats
150 g/5 oz (1¼ cups) wholemeal (whole-wheat) flour

Step 2
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) milk
750 g/1 lb 10 oz (6¼ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
15 g/½ oz (1 tablespoon) salt
2 tablespoons sugar
50 ml/1¾ fl oz (3½ tablespoons) neutral cooking oil
butter, to grease

Step 1
Place the oats and flour in a large bowl and mix well. Bring 600 ml/20 fl oz (2½ cups) water to the boil and pour it over the flour mix. Cover and leave to stand until completely cool.

Step 2
Add the cooled oat and flour mixture from step 1 to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook. Add the yeast to the milk and mix until it has dissolved, then pour it into the bowl of the stand mixer. Stir just to combine, then add the flour, salt, sugar and cooking oil. Work with the hook for 5 minutes, or until the dough is nice and elastic. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 40 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Lightly butter two 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pans. Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter, divide it in half and shape it into 2 loaves. Place these in the prepared loaf pans. Cover and leave to rise for another 40 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Bake the loaves for 40 minutes, then leave to cool on wire racks.

NORWEGAIN TWICE-BAKED BREAD

Grislabrød (Norway)

This is an historic technique that is not practised very much today. If mentioned on the packaging of industrial bread, it refers to modern techniques designed to mimic the results rather than the traditional method being used. *Grisling* of bread is said to give a special colour and texture to the crust, and a very specific taste to the bread itself. It is also said to make the bread keep fresher for longer. To *grisla* bread the leavened loaves are first placed on a large bread peel and then placed in a very hot oven for just long enough, usually just for a few minutes, so that the outer layers cook. The breads are then removed from the oven and scored on the top with a sharp blade before being put into a cooler oven to finish baking. In the second oven they are positioned very close to each other.

There are accounts that say *grislabrød* is supposed to be rolled in very fine sawdust before the first baking, but I fail to see why and the accounts are not conclusive on this part of the technique.

SOUTH SWEDISH LOAF OF SCALDED RYE FLOUR / LAPUTA BREAD

Laputabröd (Sweden)

Whether this scalded rye loaf, popular in the southern Swedish region of Skåne, is named after the flying island from Jonathan Swift's book *Gulliver's Travels* I have not been able to find out, nor how long it has been in existence. However, I suspect that this is probably a much more recent recipe than many of those who claim it to be traditional might think. My guess is that this bread, in its current form, comes from the second half of the twentieth century. Anyhow, it's delicious with butter and slices of cheese on top.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Rising time: 2 hours
Resting time: overnight
Makes: 4 loaves

Day 1
225 g/8 oz (1¾ cups plus 1 tablespoon)
  fine rye flour

Day 2, first part
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
15 g/½ oz (1 tablespoon) salt
400 g/14 oz (2¾ cups plus 1 tablespoon)
  Swedish rye/strong wheat flour (*rågsikt*),
  sifted or 240 g/8½ oz (1¾ cups) strong
  wheat flour and 160 g/5½ oz (1 cup
  plus 2 tablespoons) rye flour
butter, for greasing

Day 2, second part
475 g/16¾ oz (3¼ cups plus 2 tablespoons)
  Swedish rye/strong wheat flour (*rågsikt*),
  sifted or 285 g/10 oz (2 cups plus
  1 tablespoon) strong wheat flour
  and 190 g/6¾ oz (1¼ cups plus
  2 tablespoons) rye flour
240 g/8½ oz (1¾ cups) strong wheat flour,
  plus extra for dusting
150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) neutral cooking oil
300 g/11 oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons)
  golden syrup

Day 1
Place the fine rye flour in the bowl of a stand mixer. Pour 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) boiling water over the flour and stir until well mixed. Leave to rest overnight.

Day 2, first part
Crumble the yeast into 150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) water and stir until it is dissolved. Add the yeast mixture and all of the remaining ingredients for the first part of day 2 to the scalded rye from day 1. Work for 5 minutes using the dough hook, then cover and leave to rise for 1 hour.

Day 2, second part
Add all of the remaining ingredients and 400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) water to the bowl and work for another 5 minutes still using the dough hook. Cover and leave to rise for 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Butter four 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pans. Tip the dough onto a lightly floured work counter and divide it into 4 equal pieces. Shape each piece into a loaf before placing them in the prepared loaf pans. Cover and leave to rise for another 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and bake for 1 hour, then leave to cool on wire racks.

BASIC GRAHAM BREAD

Grahamsbröd (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 1 big loaf

50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
3 tablespoons dark syrup
5 g/0.20 oz (1 teaspoon) salt
300 g/11 oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons)
  strong wheat flour
150 g/5 oz (1 cup plus 1 tablespoon)
  graham flour

Line the bottom of a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan with baking (parchment) paper.

Dissolve the yeast in 400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) body temperature (37°C/98.6°F) water in the bowl of a stand mixer. Add the rest of the ingredients and mix using the paddle attachment until fully combined. Work at medium speed for a few minutes. The dough will be wet and sticky, almost more like an elastic batter.

Scrape the dough into the prepared cake pan. Wet your hands and flatten it a bit, then cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Bake the bread for 30 minutes, then take it out and remove it from the cake pan. Lower the oven temperature to 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2 and put the bread back into the oven for another 15 minutes. Leave to cool a wire rack.

For image see page 139

DANISH THREE-GRAIN BREAD

Trekornsbrød (Denmark)
Trekornsbröd (Sweden)

This bread is considered a modern Danish staple that's baked both in homes and industrially. It appears that it was first devised during that era about thirty years ago when a normal industrial wheat loaf would be considered 'healthy' if you added some brown flour or some kind of seeds and sprinkled a bit of bran on top. Mostly it's baked in a loaf pan but sometimes as buns or as a free-form loaf. I quite like it toasted, but I have been told that this is most unusual.

The three-grain mix used in this recipe is one of various ones commercially available in Denmark. There is no exact consensus as to what the original three grains should be and the mixes available vary a bit from brand to brand. However most of them contain a combination of three of the following: sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, linseeds, rye kernels or wheat kernels. If you cannot find a ready-mixed product, just pick your three favourites from those mentioned and mix equal parts, or use all of them and make six-seed bread.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 1 loaf

200 g/7 oz (1⅓ cups) Danish three-grain
  mix, plus extra for sprinkling (sprinkling
  is optional)
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter, plus extra
  to grease
250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) milk
25 g/1 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
10 g/¼ oz (2 teaspoons) salt
600 g/1 lb 5 oz (4¼ cups plus 1 tablespoon)
  strong wheat flour
Egg Wash (pages 73–4), optional

Mix 300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) water with the three-grain mix in a pan and bring to the boil for a few minutes. Add the butter and let it melt, then add the milk and heat until the mixture reaches body temperature (37°C/98.6°F).

Put the yeast into the bowl of a stand mixer. Add the grain and milk mixture and stir until the yeast has dissolved. Add the salt and flour and knead the dough with the dough hook until it is nice and elastic. Leave to rise under a clean dish towel for 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and butter a 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan. Put the dough into the prepared loaf pan and brush it with the egg wash, if you like, and sprinkle some extra three-grain mix on top. Bake for 35 minutes, then leave to cool on a wire rack.

ROLLED OAT TEACAKES

Tekakor med havregryn (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Rising time: 1 hour
Resting time: 2 hours
Makes: 12 teacakes

240 g/8½ oz (2¼ cups plus 1 tablespoon) rolled oats
1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) milk
175 g/6 oz (1½ sticks) butter
75 g/2¾ oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
4 tablespoons sugar
15 g/½ oz (1 tablespoon) salt
1.2 kg/2½ lb (8¾ cups plus 1 tablespoon) strong wheat flour, plus extra for dusting

Put the rolled oats into the bowl of a stand mixer and add the milk. Leave to rest for about 2 hours so that the oats soak up the milk.

Melt the butter in a pan and stir it into the oat and milk mixture. In a bowl use the sugar to break up the yeast into a fine crumble and add it to the oat mixture. Add the salt and wheat flour and work the dough with the dough hook, starting at a low speed, until it is nice and smooth. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and roll it out to a thickness of 1.5 cm/⅝ inch. Using a cookie cutter, cut out circles about 10 cm/4 inches in diameter. Transfer them to the prepared baking sheets and prick them with a fork. Cover with the dish towel and leave to rise for another 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 250°C/480°F/Gas Mark 9 and bake the teacakes for 8–10 minutes, or until golden. Leave to cool on wire racks.

CAMPING BREAD / TWIST BREAD

Pinnbröd (Sweden)

For many Swedes, memories of wet, autumnal preschool outings, berry picking and eating in the woods growing up are all about the *pinnbröd*. The original is simply wheat flour, water and salt but I strongly suggest you add the baking powder indicated in the recipe below. It is the difference between bread enjoyed by kids and avoided by everyone over the age of six and bread that's enjoyable for everyone. Another option, if you do not want to add butter and jam to the bread, is to stick a grilled sausage in that same hole instead.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 5 stick breads

3 g/0.10 oz (½ teaspoon) salt
240 g/8½ oz (2 cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
½ teaspoon baking powder (optional)
butter and jam (pages 510–11), to serve

Mix the salt, flour and baking powder, if using, together in a bowl. Add 100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) water, little by little, until it is a quite firm dough.

To cook the stick breads outdoors, you will need to put the dough into a small plastic bag to transport it easily. Find 5 sticks that are long enough to hold over a fire. Divide the dough into 5 equal portions and shape into thin logs 20-cm/8-inches long and 1-cm/½-inch in diameter, then wrap the dough around them.

Cook the breads over the fire for about 10 minutes, or until they get some colour. Remove from the fire and when they have cooled down a bit, remove from the stick and put butter and jam in the holes.

For image see page opposite

Camping Bread / Twist Bread (page 110)

STONE GROUND WHEAT BREADS FROM ÅLAND

Hemvete (Finland)
Hemvete (Sweden)

If you ask someone who grew up in Åland or someone who has spent a lot of time there, perhaps visiting relatives, to name an item of food off the top of their head, there's a pretty good chance that they will mention *hemvete*.

The name, which is a combination of the Swedish words for 'home' and 'wheat', refers to the use of stoneground whole-wheat flour. Historically this flour was ground at home, on each separate farm. Today, special *hemvete* flour is sold commercially for baking these soft, rather thick, flat cakes of bread. It is essentially a stoneground, whole-grain wheat flour with a fairly uniform texture.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 3 breads

500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) milk (or use water or a mixture of both)
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter
10 g/¼ oz (2 teaspoons) fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
600 g/1 lb 5 oz (4 cups plus 1 tablespoon) stone ground, whole-grain wheat flour
15 g/½ oz (1 tablespoon) salt

Heat the milk or water in a pan over low heat and stir in the butter to melt it. Remove from the heat and leave to cool to room temperature.

Dissolve the yeast into your chosen liquid and butter mixture. Pour the liquid into the bowl of a stand mixer. Add the flour and salt and knead with the dough hook at medium speed for about 10 minutes, or until shiny, smooth and elastic. The dough should come away from the edge of the bowl when it's done. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise until doubled in size.

Line 1 or 2 baking sheets, depending on the size of your oven, with baking (parchment) paper.

Tip the dough onto a lightly floured work counter and divide it into 3 equal pieces. Be careful not to incorporate more flour into the dough. Shape each piece into a rough ball and then, with a lightly floured rolling pin, roll them into rounds, about 1.5-cm/⅝-inch thick and 16.5-cm/6½-inches wide. Transfer the cakes to the prepared baking sheets, cover and leave at room temperature until almost doubled in thickness.

Preheat the oven to 225°C/435°F/Gas Mark 7. Prick the cakes with a fork and bake until dark golden in colour. It will take about 15 minutes, depending your oven. Leave to cool on wire racks.

For image see page opposite

Clockwise from top left: Upplandic Rye Bread (page 130); Stone Ground Wheat Breads from Åland (page 112); Finnish Sweet-and-Sour Loaf (page 141)

SODA AND CULTURED MILK BREAD

Filmjölkslimpa (Sweden)

A more modern variation of the traditional Scandinavian wholegrain rye loaf like Danish Rye Bread (page 128), this recipe contains many things like bicarbonate of soda (baking soda), sunflower seeds and dark syrup, which have only been used in our part of the world for the last 150 years or so. The first recipes I have found were from about the late 1950s, and were leavened with bicarbonate of soda but were not very sweet. Quite heavily sweetened bicarbonate-leavened breads like the one produced by this recipe became much more common in the 1970s and have remained so up until today.

If you have baked breads that contain both bicarbonate of soda and sunflower seeds before, you will know that the seeds tend to turn green. Nothing is wrong with them, it's simply because they contain chlorogenic acid, which is a part of the chlorophyll in green plants. The chlorogenic acid reacts with the alkaline bicarbonate in the bread when heated and the colour green is the result of this reaction.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Makes: 1 loaf

450 ml/15 fl oz (1⅔ cups plus 2 tablespoons) cultured milk
50 ml/2 fl oz (1 tablespoon) dark syrup
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)
200 g/7 oz (1⅔ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for sprinkling (optional)
120 g/4 oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons) graham flour
100 g/3½ oz (¾ cup) rye flour
5 g/0.20 oz (1 teaspoon) salt
40 g/1½ oz (¼ cup) sunflower seeds
30 g/1 oz (¼ cup) linseeds (flaxseeds)
30 g/1 oz (¼ cup) hazelnuts, whole or chopped
50 g/2 oz (¼ cup) dried apricots, chopped
50 g/2 oz (⅓ cup) raisins

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line a 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan with baking (parchment) paper.

Mix the sour milk, syrup and bicarbonate of soda (baking soda) together in a bowl. Add the different flours, salt, seeds and hazelnuts. Add the chopped dried apricots and the raisins, then mix everything together until it forms a sticky dough.

Put the dough into the prepared loaf pan, sprinkle some extra plain (all-purpose) flour on top if you want to and bake for 1 hour. Cover the bread with aluminium foil if the top colours too much while baking. Unmould from the loaf pan and leave to cool on a wire rack.

WHEAT BUNS

Boller / Hveteboller (Norway)
Sämpylä / Semla (Finland)
Boller (Denmark)
Källarfranska (Sweden)

Variations of these simple little buns exist throughout the whole Nordic region and they resemble each other quite closely form country to country. They are often baked in people's homes and consumed rather quickly, split in two and turned into sandwiches. Before baking, they can be brushed with egg wash or milk and/or sprinkled with sesame or poppy seeds. They can also be left just as they are. They do not store particularly well.

They can be sweet to various degrees. This particular recipe, not so much. For a sweeter version refer to the Sweet Wheat Bun Dough recipes on pages 258–9.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Rising time: 40 minutes
Makes: 20 buns

50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) water or milk, at room temperature
50 ml/1¾ fl oz (3½ tablespoons) rapeseed (canola) oil
10 g/¼ oz (2 teaspoons) salt
2 tablespoons sugar
825 g/1 lb 13 oz (6⅓ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Dissolve the yeast in the water or milk in the bowl of a stand mixer. Add the remaining ingredients and work with the dough hook for about 5 minutes on medium speed.

On a lightly floured work counter split the dough in half and roll it out into 2 logs. Cut each log into 10 pieces and shape into round buns with your hands. Place the buns onto the prepared baking sheets and cover with clean dish towels. Allow to rise for about 40 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Bake the buns for about 10 minutes. The buns should colour but not too much. Leave them to cool covered with clean dish towels – you don't want a dry crust to form.

SMALL WHEAT BUNS

Småfranska (Sweden)

These soft-crusted buns bring back sweet memories of growing up in Sweden in the 1980s. We had them as a snack with butter and cheese and perhaps some orange marmalade (Swedish Coop's own brand, *blåvitt*) after school. They should not leaven for too long. It's important that they really have a bit of wheat flour sweetness left paired with aroma from the yeast. Leave them to rise for too long and they will lose that balance. Breads like these are a funny thing because this way of baking is not 'on trend' at the moment, so they are often looked down on by anyone who takes their food seriously. But really, haven't we all had at least one too many meaninglessly pretentious sourdough breakfast buns over the last few years not to admit that a fast yeast-driven fermentation of a dough produced by highly processed white flour is tasty too, in its own way?

This recipe comes from the book I had in my home economics class at elementary school.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Rising time: 30–35 minutes
Makes: 12 buns

5 g/0.20 oz (1 teaspoon) salt
4 tablespoons neutral cooking oil
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
570 g/1 lb 4 oz (4¾ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting

Place 400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) body temperature (37°C/98.6°F) water, the salt, oil and yeast in the bowl of a stand mixer and stir to dissolve the yeast. Add the flour and work with the dough hook until the dough comes off the edges of the bowl. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 15 minutes, or until the dough has just doubled in size.

Line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and cut it into 12 equal pieces. Roll each piece into a round bun and place them on the prepared baking sheet. Cover with a dish towel and leave to rise for 15–20 minutes, or until they have just doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 250°C/480°F/Gas Mark 9. Brush the buns carefully with some water and bake for 10 minutes, or until golden. Leave to cool on wire racks.

DANISH OR NORWEGIAN BREAKFAST BUNS

Rundstykker (Denmark)
Rundstykker (Norway)

These buns aren't really just served for breakfast, but on other occasions too. Even though I imagine that if we look a bit further back in history they were mostly made from wheat, they can contain almost any kind of flour today, and any type of seed, nut or seasoning too for that matter. The common feature of these buns is that they are round and can fit in your hand. Generally, *rundstykker* are cut in half horizontally and served with butter and various toppings to make sandwiches.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 miuntes
Rising time: 50–60 miuntes
Makes: 16 buns

Variation 1: Wheat
600 ml/20 fl oz (2½ cups) milk or water
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
5 g/0.20 oz (1 teaspoon) salt
50 ml/1¾ fl oz (3½ tablespoons) neutral cooking oil
820 g/1 lb 13 oz (6¾ cups plus 1 tablespoon) strong wheat flour, plus extra for dusting

Variation 2: Rye
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
5 g/0.20 oz (1 teaspoon) salt
50 ml/1¾ fl oz (3½ tablespoons) neutral cooking oil
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (4 cups plus 2 tablespoons) strong wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
320 g/11¼ oz (2⅔ cups) rye flour

Variation 3: Wholemeal and oats
600 ml/20 fl oz (2½ cups) milk, at body temperature (37°C/98.6°F)
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
5 g/0.20 oz (1 teaspoon) salt
50 ml/1¾ fl oz (3½ tablespoons) neutral cooking oil
240 g/8½ oz (2 cups) wholemeal (whole-wheat) flour, plus extra for dusting
120 g/4 oz (1 cup) oatmeal
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (4 cups plus 2 tablespoons) strong wheat flour

Add the milk or 600 ml/20 fl oz (2½ cups) water at body temperature (37°C/98.6°F) and the yeast to the bowl of a stand mixer and stir until the yeast is completely dissolved. Add all of the remaining ingredients and work with the dough hook for 5 minutes, or until the dough is smooth and elastic. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Tip the dough onto a lightly floured work counter and divide and shape it into 16 equal balls. Place the balls on the prepared baking sheets, cover with clean dish towels and leave them to rise for another 30 minutes, or once again until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Bake the buns for 10 minutes or until golden. Leave to cool on wire racks.

OVERNIGHT BREAKFAST BUNS

Kalljästa frukostbullar (Sweden)

Very popular on weekend mornings, these buns are prepared the day before, leavened in the refrigerator and baked for breakfast. Serve them warm with butter, cheese, marmalade or whatever other topping you like.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Rising time: 30 minutes
Resting time: overnight
Makes: 20 buns

25 g/1 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
10 g/¼ oz (2 teaspoons) salt
1 tablespoon honey
60 g/2¼ oz (½ cup) graham flour
480 g/17 oz (3½ cups) strong wheat flour, plus extra for dusting

Dissolve the yeast in 400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) water in a bowl. Add the rest of the ingredients and mix together until you have a nice smooth dough. You don't need to knead this dough at all. Cover the bowl with clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave it in the refrigerator overnight.

In the morning, line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Tip the dough onto a lightly floured work counter and knead it just for a few seconds. Using a pair of scissors, cut the dough into 20 equal pieces and put them directly on the prepared baking sheet. You don't need to shape them. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 250°C/480°F/Gas Mark 9 and bake the buns for 10 minutes, or until golden. Serve them warm from the oven.

For image see page 103

NORWEGIAN CRESCENT BUNS

Horn (Norway)

These individual crescent-shaped buns are very popular in Norway. They look a bit like small croissants made from ordinary wheat dough and are generally cut into halves before being served with butter, cheese, ham or other toppings.

Sometimes they are brushed with egg wash, and other times they are left plain. If they are brushed with egg wash, they can be sprinkled with a topping before being baked, most commonly sesame or poppy seeds, but sometimes also pumpkin, sunflower seeds or wheat semolina.

Preparation and cooking time: 50 minutes
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 24 pieces

300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) milk, at body temperature (37°C/98.6°F)
25 g/1 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (4 cups plus 2 tablespoons) plain (all-purpose) flour, plus extra for dusting
10 g/¼ oz (2 teaspoons) salt
2 tablespoons sugar
50 ml/1¾ fl oz (3½ tablespoons) neutral cooking oil
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)
toppings, for sprinkling (see intro above)

Pour the lukewarm milk into the bowl of a stand mixer, then add the yeast and stir to dissolve completely. Add all of the remaining ingredients (except for the egg wash and toppings) and work with the dough hook for 5 minutes, or until the dough is shiny and elastic. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and divide it into 3 equal pieces and shape into balls. Roll each ball out into a round of about 1.5 cm/⅝ inch in thickness, then cut each round into 8 pizza-like wedges.

Brush the top of the dough wedges very lightly with water and roll them up into crescent shapes starting with the side opposite the tip of the wedge so that this part ends up in the middle of the roll. Place them onto the prepared baking sheets.

If you want to use a topping, brush the crescents with egg wash now and invert them into a dish filled with the topping you prefer before inverting them back onto the prepared baking sheets.

Cover the crescents with a clean dish towel and leave them to rise for 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. If you are not using a topping but just egg wash, then brush the egg wash over the crescents now. Bake for 8–10 minutes, or until lightly golden in colour. Leave to cool on the baking sheets.

TEA BUNS

Teboller (Denmark)
Tekakor (Sweden)

I love these buns hot from the oven with some butter, honey or marmalade and a thick slice of mature cheese. Some people like a bit of cardamom in their tea buns, I am one of those people. Add 2 teaspoons finely ground cardamom seeds with the milk if you want to.

Preparation and cooking time: 35 minutes
Rising time: 50–60 minutes
Makes: 15–20 tea buns

600 ml/20 fl oz (2½ cups) milk
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
1 egg
800 g/1¾ lb (5¾ cups plus 2 tablespoons)
strong wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
80 g/3 oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) rolled oats
4 tablespoons sugar
15 g/½ oz (1 tablespoon) salt

Mix the milk and yeast in the bowl of a stand mixer and stir until the yeast has dissolved. Add the remaining ingredients and knead the dough with the dough hook for 5–10 minutes, or until shiny and elastic. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for about 30 minutes, or until it has doubled in size.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Tip the dough onto a lightly floured work counter and roll to a thickness of 1.5 cm/¾ inch. Using a cookie cutter, cut out 15–20 circles of 1 cm/½ inch in diameter. Keep the trimmings between the cut circles and roll them out again to make more circles rather than throwing them away. Transfer the circles to the prepared baking sheets, prick them with a fork and cover with a clean dish towel. Leave to rise for another 20–30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 250°C/480°F/Gas Mark 9. Bake for 8–10 minutes, or until golden. Eat the buns when they are fresh as breads like these don't store well.

DANISH BIRTHDAY BUNS

Fødselsdagsboller (Denmark)

Serve these buns for breakfast in bed on someone's birthday, and don't forget to put little Danish flags in them.

Preparation and cooking time: 40 minutes
Rising time: 1½ hours
Makes: 20 buns

75 g/2¾ oz (5 tablespoons) butter
600 ml/20 fl oz (2½ cups) milk
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
20 g/1 oz (4 teaspoons) salt
4 tablespoons sugar
1 kg (2¼ lb (7⅓ cups) strong wheat flour,
plus extra for dusting
100 g/3½ oz (⅔ cup) raisins (optional)
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)

Melt the butter in a pan. Add the milk and heat to body temperature (37°C/96.8°F). Mix the butter and milk mixture with the yeast in the bowl of a stand mixer. Once the yeast has dissolved, add the salt, sugar and the flour, little by little, while working the dough with the dough hook. You might not need all of the flour, so watch the dough carefully. If you want to add the raisins, put them in towards the end, so they don't break up too much. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 1 hour, or until doubled in size.

Line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the dough onto a lightly floured work counter and knead it by hand for a few minutes. Cut it into 20 pieces and shape them into buns. Put the buns onto the prepared baking sheet, cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for another 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Brush the buns with the egg wash and bake them for 10 minutes, or until golden.

For image see page 103

GRAHAM BUNS

Grahamsboller (Denmark)
Grahamsbullar (Sweden)

These buns are made with graham flour, an unbleached wholegrain wheat flour. The wheat endosperm (the core of the grain) is ground finely, then mixed with the bran and germ, which are ground separately and more coarsely. Enjoy warm with butter, marmalade and mature hard cheese.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 20 buns

500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons)
milk or water (or a mixture of both)
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter
25 g/1 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
3 tablespoons sugar
300 g/11 oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons)
strong wheat flour
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (3½ cups plus 1 tablespoon)
graham flour
15 g/½ oz (2½ teaspoons) salt

Heat the milk or water in a pan over a low heat and stir in the butter to melt it. Remove from the heat and leave to cool to room temperature.

Dissolve the yeast in the liquid in the bowl of a stand mixer. Add the flours and salt and knead with the dough hook at medium speed for about 10 minutes, or until the dough is smooth and shiny Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave for 30 minutes, or until it has doubled in size.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the dough onto a floured work counter and divide it into 20 equal pieces. Roll them into smooth buns and transfer to the prepared baking sheets. Cover with clean dish towels and leave for another 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 225°C/435°F/Gas Mark 7. Bake the buns until dark golden brown. Transfer to wire racks and leave to cool slightly.

For image see page 139

BASIC WHEAT SCONES

Vetescones (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 4 scones

450 g/1 lb (3¾ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour
4 teaspoons baking powder
5 g/0.20 oz (1 teaspoon) salt
1 tablespoon sugar
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter,
cut into pieces
300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) milk

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Combine the dry ingredients in a bowl. Add the butter pieces and mix with your hands until you have a crumbly consistency and there are no lumps of butter left. Add the milk and stir just until you have a sticky dough, but don't stir too much.

Divide the dough into 4 equal pieces and place them on the prepared baking sheet. Press each piece with your hand until you get circular cakes, about 12 cm/4½ inches in diameter. Make 2 cuts with a knife almost all the way through in a cross so that you can divide each scone into 4 pieces after baking. Prick with a fork and bake for 10–12 minutes, or until golden. Serve them warm from the oven.

WHOLEMEAL SCONES

Fullkornsscones (Sweden)

A little bit coarser and denser than the simple wheat-only version above, these scones also have a bit more flavour, which comes from the linseeds and sunflower seeds as well as the mix of grains.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 4 scones

300 g/11 oz (2½ cups) Swedish rye/ strong wheat flour (*rågsikt*), sifted or 180 g/6¼ oz (1¼ cups) strong wheat flour and 120 g/4 oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) rye flour
80 g/3 oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) rolled oats
2 tablespoons linseeds (flaxseeds)
3 tablespoons sunflower seeds
4 teaspoons baking powder
5 g/0.20 oz (1 teaspoon) salt
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, cut into pieces
2 tablespoons honey
200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) milk

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Mix all of the dry ingredients together in a bowl. Add the butter pieces and mix with your hands until you have a crumbly consistency and there are no lumps of butter left. Add the honey and milk and stir to a sticky dough.

Divide the dough into 4 equal pieces and place them on the prepared baking sheet. Press each piece with your hand until you get circular cakes, about 12 cm/4½ inches in diameter. Make 2 cuts with a knife almost all the way through in a cross so that you can divide each scone into 4 pieces after baking. Prick with a fork and bake for 10–12 minutes, or until golden. Serve them warm from the oven.

OAT SCONES

Havrescones (Sweden)

These are my favourite scones. I have them with butter, marmalade and well-matured cheese.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 4 scones

90 g/3¼ oz (1 cup) rolled oats
300 g/11 oz (2½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 tablespoon sugar
4 teaspoons baking powder
5 g/0.20 oz (1 teaspoon) salt
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, cut into pieces
300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) milk

Preheat the oven to 250°C/480°F/Gas Mark 9 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Mix all of the dry ingredients together in a bowl. Add the butter pieces and mix until you have a crumbly consistency and there are no lumps of butter left. Add the milk and stir until you have quite a sticky dough.

Divide the dough into 4 equal pieces and place them on the prepared baking sheet. Press each piece with your hand until you have 4 circular scones, about 12 cm/4½ inches in diameter. Make 2 cuts with a knife almost all the way through in a cross so that you can divide each scone into 4 pieces after baking. Prick the scones with a fork and bake for 10–12 minutes, or until golden. Serve them warm from the oven.

FULL GRAIN SCONES

Grova Scones (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 2 large scones or 4 smaller ones

150 g/5 oz (1 cup plus 1 tablespoon) coarse rye flour
35 g/1¼ oz (⅓ cup) oat bran
5 g/0.20 oz (1 teaspoon) salt
2 teaspoons baking powder
75 g/2¾ oz (5 tablespoons) butter, cut into 1-cm/½-inch dice
150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) yogurt, buttermilk or another cultured milk

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Mix all of the dry ingredients in a bowl. Add the butter pieces and mix until you have a crumbly consistency and there are no lumps of butter left. Add the yogurt and work the mixture a bit more with your hands, but just until it holds together.

Divide the sticky dough into 2 or 4 equal pieces and place them on the prepared baking sheet. Press each piece with your hand to flatten slightly, until you have 4 circular scones. Bake for 10–12 minutes, or until golden. Serve them warm from the oven.

BREADS BASED ON RYE FLOUR

Previous page: Snowstorm, Jämtland, Sweden 2017.

Rye makes amazing breads, which have tremendous importance in Nordic food culture, especially in Finland and Denmark. In Finland, with its marginal climate where rye and barley are the two most popular grains to grow, rye has always been the grain of choice for baking. There's an Eastern European and Russian influence on the food culture there, which informs a very rich tradition of various slow-leavened breads and rye-based pasties.

Denmark has an amazing agriculture production for being a fairly small country if you measure its surface. It has the largest overall production of grains in the entire Nordic region, and is the largest producer of rye. Rye features in many Danish dishes, the most iconic of which is probably the rye loaf with or without kernels baked in a pan (*rugbrød*, page 128). A conversation about the soul of Danish food culture without touching upon this bread would be unthinkable as it makes up the base for one of the country's most emblematic dishes, the open-faced sandwich (*smørrebrød*, page 204). *Rugbrød* is part of many Danes' daily diet.

Rye produces soft, fluffy and delicate breads when mixed with wheat flour and leavened with yeast, as well as dense, acidic and crusty ones when left to dominate the make-up of a dough and when they are leavened with sourdough.

All over the Nordic region we eat less rye now than we used to. In some parts the consumption has gone down by about 50 per cent since the 1960s. This is a pity as rye breads are both tasty and practical since they store much better than those made from wheat alone. As an added bonus rye is good for your health with its high fibre content (14 per cent) and a carbohydrate make-up that contributes to more even blood sugar levels than that of many other cereal crops.

DANISH RYE BREAD

Rugbrød (Denmark)

I love Danish rye bread, it is probably the tastiest bread I know. It can be found made either from finely ground flour and is then called *rugbrød uden kerner*, or with a coarser mix of grains containing a lot of whole kernels. This version is called *rugbrød med kerner* (which means that it contains whole kernels of rye). It is a dense bread with little or no sweetening added. It is made without the addition of any fats and it is leavened slowly. It is also baked slowly and for a long time, sometimes up to 24 hours. It is quite common though to make the dough with either buttermilk or cultured milk. The longer you bake bread like this, the darker the interior will be, even if the temperature is rather low. It is good to let the loaves sit for another 24 hours after they are baked before cutting into them so they can set properly. Traditionally *rugbrød* is made with sourdough, but since many people baking at home today may not have an active one of those going at all times, it has become increasingly popular to use cultured milk to add the required *lactobacillus* and resulting acidity. This recipe is a modern variation in the sense that it uses buttermilk or cultured milk, but you can use the same recipe with rye sourdough instead, just substitute the two quantities of buttermilk with rye sourdough made according to the guidelines on page 540 and in step 2 use 750 g/1 lb 10½ oz (5¾ cups) coarse rye flour instead of 1 kg/2¼ lb (7½ cups plus 2 tablespoons).

Rugbrød provides the base of most Open-faced Danish Sandwiches (page 204).

Preparation and cooking time: 5 days
Makes: 3 loaves

Step 1
10 g/¼ oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons)
  buttermilk or cultured milk, at
  room temperature
150 g/5 oz (1 cup plus 2 tablespoons) coarse
  rye flour
5 g/0.20 oz (1 teaspoon) salt

Step 2
500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons)
  buttermilk or cultured milk
30 g/1 oz (1½ tablespoons) salt
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (2½ cups) rye kernels
1 kg/2¼ lb (7½ cups plus 2 tablespoons)
  coarse rye flour

Step 3
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (2½ cups) rye kernels
butter, to grease

Step 1
Dissolve the yeast in the buttermilk or cultured milk in a bowl, add the remaining ingredients, mix well and leave to sit, covered, for 72 hours at room temperature.

Step 2
Transfer the now fermented and freshly acidic smelling dough from step 1 to a large bowl. Add the ingredients for step 2 and 1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) water and mix well with your hands or a wooden spoon. Cover and leave to sit for another 24 hours at room temperature.

Step 3
Place the rye kernels from step 3 in a new bowl and pour 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) boiling water over them. Leave to steep for 45 minutes.

Butter three 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pans. Add the step 3 mixture to the dough from step 2 and mix well. Transfer to the prepared loaf pans and cover with clingfilm (plastic wrap). Leave to rise a bit for 3 hours at room temperature.

Preheat the oven to 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2. Bake for about 3 hours. Cover with aluminium foil after the first 1½ hours so that the top does not colour too much. Leave to cool on wire racks.

For image see page 133

SCANIAN RYE BREAD

Kavring (Denmark)
Kavring (Sweden)

Kavring is a dense bread made from partially scalded rye and fermented over two days. In my opinion it should be flavoured mainly with caraway and aniseed, but in many recipes fennel and bitter orange peel are also added.

Gravy browning is optional, but it is often added to make the bread dark brown – and some recipes can also contain Chinese mushroom soy sauce. Personally I don't like this, but if you want a darker and more savoury bread then go ahead and try it.

I often see recipes for *kavring* that contain bicarbonate of soda (baking soda), buttermilk, seeds, grains and all kinds of different things. These are probably all delicious breads in their own right, but they are not *kavring*.

I like *kavring* with some butter and a nice topping such as cured salmon or a strong hard cheese. *Kavring* is also great lightly buttered as a little accompaniment for oysters on the half shell.

In Norway, until very recently, *kavring* always referred to rusks, the one we call *skorpor* in Sweden (Crisp Rolls / Rusks, page 190). However, more recently cultural diffusion between the countries has led to confusion in the matter. Today, if you do an internet search on Norwegian *kavring* recipes, 85 per cent will still be rusks whilst 15 per cent will show a recipe for a bread like the Swedish one.

You can reduce the recipe to make 1 or 2 loaves, but *kavring* stores really well, for up to 2 weeks in a paper bag and almost indefinitely in the freezer.

Preparation and resting time: 3 days
Cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 3 loaves

Day 1
360 g/12 oz (3 cups) fine rye flour
30 g/1¼ oz (1½ tablespoons) salt
1 tablespoon caraway seeds
1 tablespoon aniseed

Day 2
250 g/9 oz (1¾ cups plus 1 tablespoon)
  strong wheat flour, plus extra for the pans
600 g/1 lb 5 oz (4¼ cups) Swedish rye/strong
  wheat flour (*rågsikt*), sifted or 360 g/
  12¼ oz (2⅔ cups) strong wheat flour
  and 240 g/8½ oz (1¾ cups) rye flour
350 g/12 oz (3 cups) fine rye flour
200 g/7 oz (½ cup plus 1 tablespoon)
  golden syrup
25 g/1 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
butter, to grease

Day 1
Bring 600 ml/20 fl oz (2½ cups) water to the boil in a large pan. Combine the rye flour, salt and seeds in a large heatproof mixing bowl, then pour on the boiling water and stir until smooth. Leave overnight at room temperature. Do not cover the bowl, as you want the *lactobacillus* in your room to infect the dough, together with whatever life is present in the flour.

Day 2
Transfer the dough to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook. Add all the ingredients (except the butter and reserving 2 handfuls of the rye flour for later) and 350 ml/12 fl oz (1½ cups) of cold water. Knead the dough at a medium speed for 15 minutes or until smooth, shiny and elastic.

Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave the dough at room temperature to double in size. It can take anything from 30 minutes to 2 hours.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter and flour three 21 x 11 x 6-cm/8½ x 4½ x 2½-inch loaf pans.

Flour a work counter with the reserved rye flour and tip out the risen dough. Divide into 3 equal pieces and shape into loaves. Lift them into the prepared pans and leave to rise a final time, until they reach 1.5 cm/⅝ inch below the top of the pan.

Place the pans on a baking sheet and cover each with a piece of baking (parchment) paper. Place another baking sheet on top and weight it with something heavy and heatproof. This is important for producing the characteristic brick shape and density this bread is recognized for.

Bake for about 1 hour. The loaves will still be slightly sticky inside and they need to be taken out of the pans and rested on wire racks for another 24 hours before slicing and eating.

For image see page 133

UPPLANDIC RYE BREAD

Upplandskubb (Sweden)

This recipe from the eastern province of Sweden that includes Stockholm, Uppland, is not often seen anymore, but deserves to be, simply because it is both unique and delicious.

This recipe has its origins in the kitchens of the 1920s where many people didn't yet have access to an oven suitable for baking in. The original versions had the bread steamed in a smaller pot, placed in a bigger pot with some water at the bottom, which was covered with a lid and put straight on the stovetop rather than in an oven. This technique vaguely resembles the one used for the rye breads of Iceland (see pages 132–4), which are commonly baked in the island's thermal springs. More recent recipes for *upplandskubb* place the pot containing the bread dough in a water bath, which is in turn placed in an oven to be baked.

Preparation and cooking time: 3 hours
Makes: 1 loaf

50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
15 g/½ oz (1 tablespoon) salt
210 g/7¼ oz (½ cup plus 2 tablespoons)
  golden syrup
350 g/12 oz (3 cups) fine rye flour
300 g/11 oz (2¼ cups) strong wheat flour
butter, to grease
flour, to dust

Combine all of the ingredients, except for the 2 flours, with 300 ml/10½ oz (1¼ cups) cold water in the bowl of a stand mixer and mix together well. Add the flours and knead with the dough hook for about 10 minutes, or until the dough is smooth and shiny.

Butter a 3-litre/12¾ cups (ovenproof) pot and dust lightly with flour. Put the dough in the pot, cover with a clean dish towel and leave it at room temperature for about 30 minutes, or until it doubles in size.

If you want to cook it in the oven, while the dough is rising, preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. If you are steaming it on the stove, a medium boil is required to generate enough steam. Remember to refill the water from time to time.

If you want to steam it on the stove, place a pot big enough to hold the smaller pot containing the bread on the stove. Add water to a depth of about 3 cm/1¼ inch. Place an upside-down cup or something to distance the bread pot from the bottom of the one containing the water at the bottom. Place the bread pot on top of that and put the lid on both. Bring to a simmer and cook until steamed through, which will take a couple of hours.

Once the bread is cooked, turn it out of the pot and place it on a wire rack to cool.

For image see page 113

FINNISH RYE BREAD

Ruisleipä (Finland)

Finnish rye bread, *ruisleipä*, differs from the Scandinavian rye breads in several ways. The first is that it is often made solely from un-sifted, coarse rye flour, whilst in most other Nordic countries rye breads are usually based on a cereal mix, perhaps using some fine rye as a base flour, some whole rye kernels for texture and some wheat flour to provide gluten. *Ruisleipä* is most often baked as a flatter cake rather than as a loaf or in a pan, and the cakes are often prepared with a hole in the middle to hang them on a pole under the ceiling for storage.

Finnish rye bread is often quite sour from a lengthy fermentation process and is almost never seasoned with anything more than salt. More recent recipes often contain a bit of wheat flour and sometimes even spices or golden syrup. I prefer the older-style, all-rye versions, with their fresh sourdough acidity and dense texture.

To sour properly, the flour should be organic and untreated. I prefer to add yeast to the first starter to ensure proper balance (and correct leavening) between the *lactobacillus* and yeast cells. If you prepare this recipe in a space where you bake often, the yeast cells floating in the air will be of the right kind and probably plentiful enough to make it work, so you can omit the added yeast if you like.

Preparation and resting time: 4 days
Cooking time: 45–60 minutes
Makes: 8 small or 2 large cakes

Day 1
120 g/4 oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons) coarse
  rye flour
5 g/⅛ oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)

Day 2
220 g/7¾ oz (1⅔ cups) coarse rye flour

Day 3
330 g/11½ oz (2½ cups) coarse rye flour,
  plus extra for dusting
10 g/¼ oz (2 teaspoons) salt

Day 1
Mix 175 ml/6 fl oz (¾ cup) water with the rye flour and yeast in a large bowl. Leave overnight at room temperature. Do not cover the bowl, as you want the *lactobacillus* in your room to work on the dough, together with what's present in the flour.

Day 2
Add the flour and another 330 ml/11 fl oz (1¼ cups plus 2 tablespoons) water and mix well. Cover and leave overnight again.

Day 3
Check the starter dough to make sure that you have plenty of active fermentation. Is it frothing? Taste it to make sure you have *lactobacilli* in there, creating lactic acid. Does it taste fresh and acidic? If the answer to both these questions is yes, then proceed with the recipe. If not, wait another day.

To finish the dough, add the salt and the rest of the flour and transfer to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook. Knead for quite some time. It might take up to 30 minutes on medium speed, depending on the efficiency of your mixer. The dough should be sticky and dense, but shiny-looking. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise until doubled in size.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. With wet hands transfer the dough to a floured work counter and divide it into 8 equal pieces. Shape them into round cakes, then poke a hole in the middle of each cake and expand the hole to a diameter of about 4.5 cm/1¾ inches. Still with wet hands, smooth the surface of each cake – it should look silky. Dust the cakes lightly with flour and transfer them to the prepared baking sheets. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for about 2 hours, or until almost but not quite doubled in size when ready to bake.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6.

Prick the cakes with a fork before baking. It will take longer to bake than you think, I would guess about 1 hour and, since the cakes are already a dark colour, using colour to indicate doneness is dangerous. I prefer to bake until the cakes have a core temperature of about 96°C/205°F. When the cakes are done, wrap them immediately in clean towels and leave them to the next day to cool and slowly soften, before cutting into them.

For image see page 133

ICELANDIC RYE BREAD

Rúgbrauð / Hverabrauð / Brumari (Iceland)

In Iceland the rye loaf is usually quite dense, leavened with bicarbonate of soda (baking soda) and rather sweet, almost like cake. It is not baked in the oven but steamed, either in a geothermal area or sometimes in the oven. Historically a sort of wooden vessel was used but today more commonly a simple bucket with lid. Sites for baking bread can be found around hot springs close to villages in the Icelandic countryside. They function a bit like communal spaces and every family will have a hole in the ground in which they bake their bread. It is funny walking over the steaming ground, criss-crossing between holes covered by ramshackle lids, the smell of sweet bread mingling with the sulphurous scent of volcanic activity.

This recipe comes from Gudrun Einarsdottir who helped me out with a lot of the Icelandic content for this book. It was originally her grandmother's.

Rúgbrauð means rye bread, *hverabrauð* refers specifically to bread baked next to hot springs and *brumari*, 'thunder bread', refers to the effects from eating any bread containing a lot of dietary fibres.

Preparation and cooking time: 13 hours
Makes: 1 loaf

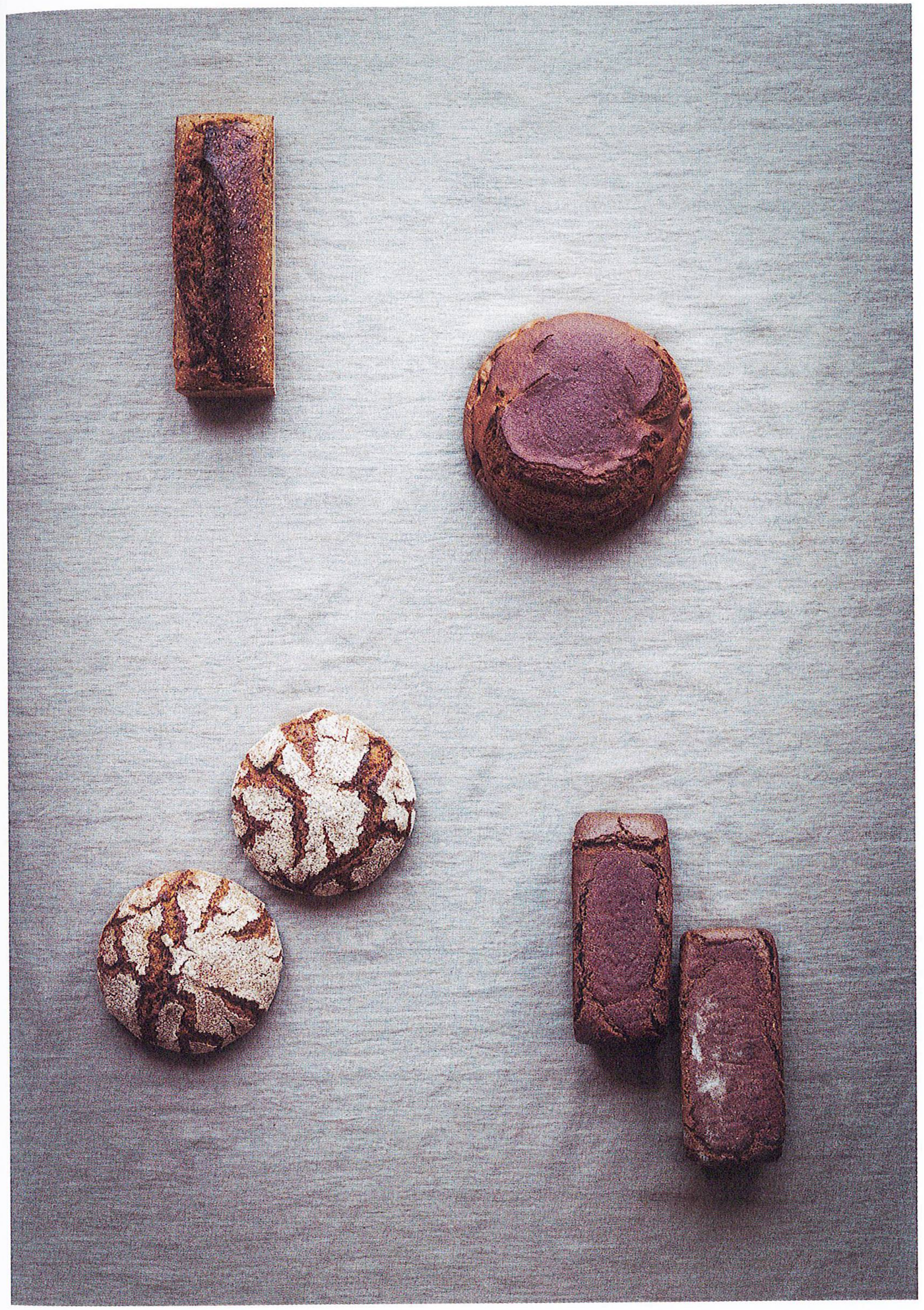
460 g/1 lb 1 oz (3½ cups) rye flour
260 g/9¼ oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) plain (all-purpose) flour
1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) cultured milk
400 g/14 oz (1 cup plus 2 tablespoons) golden syrup
15 g/½ oz (1 tablespoon) salt
3 teaspoons bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)

Line a 3-litre/101 fl oz (12½-cup) heatproof vessel, pot or bucket with a lid with some baking (parchment) paper.

Mix all the ingredients together in a bowl until fully combined, then transfer to the prepared vessel.

If you do not have access to a suitable geothermal area, place the vessel – with the lid on – in the oven at 90°C/195°F for 12 hours. Let the bread cool completely on a wire rack before cutting into it. If you do have a geothermal area close by, place the dough-filled vessel in the ground and cover it to start baking and proceed as described above.

For image see page opposite



Clockwise from top left: Danish Rye Bread (page 128); Icelandic Rye Bread (page 132); Scanian Rye Bread (page 128); Finnish Rye Bread (page 130)

ICELANDIC UNLEAVENED RYE FLATBREADS

Flatkaka / Flatbrauð (Iceland)

These flatbreads were traditionally cooked directly on hot stones, later on the flat top of a cast-iron stove and today most often in a cast-iron frying pan or skillet.

Commercially available *flatbrauð* usually contain wheat flour in addition to the rye flour of more authentic recipes. Most often the rye flour used in *flatbrauð* is scalded with boiling water to improve the texture.

Flatbrauð are often buttered and served as the bottom of a sandwich or as a side to a main dish like Icelandic *hangikjöt* (cold-smoked and aged mutton).

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: about 10 cakes, depending on size

550 g/1 lb 4 oz (4⅔ cups) fine rye flour,
  plus extra for dusting
10 g/¼ oz (2 teaspoons) salt

Mix the flour and salt together in a large mixing bowl. Pour on 300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) boiling water and mix it in thoroughly. Start with a wooden spoon and then use your hands. It should take at least 10 minutes; the dough shouldn't be too stiff but it will always be quite sticky.

Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter. Roll it out to about 3–10 mm/⅛–½ inches thick then cut into circles using a large ring cutter or cut around a round template, like a plate, with a sharp knife.

Preheat a dry griddle, cast-iron frying pan (skillet) or electric hotplate to medium.

Prick the cakes with a fork and fry them on both sides until they are quite dark in places. Stack the cakes into a pile, as they are done, so they don't dry out.

FAROESE RYE BREAD

Rugbreyð (Faroe Islands)

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Chilling time: overnight
Resting time: 1 hour
Makes: 2 loaves

2 tablespoons sugar
150 g/5 oz (⅔ cup) Sourdough Starter,
  using rye flour (page 540)
15 g/½ oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
15 g/½ oz (1 tablespoon) salt
1 kg/2¼ lb (7¾ cups) rye flour
1 kg/2¼ lb (8⅓ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour

Add 1.25 litres/42 fl oz (5¼ cups) water, the sugar, sourdough starter and yeast to the bowl of a stand mixer and stir until the yeast has dissolved. Add all of the remaining ingredients and work using the dough hook for about 10 minutes, or until the dough is smooth and sticky. Divide the dough between two 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch nonstick loaf pans, cover with clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave in the refrigerator overnight.

Remove the pans from the refrigerator 1 hour before they are to be baked and leave at room temperature.

Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4. Bake for 60–70 minutes. Leave to cool in the pans for a bit before removing them from the pans and leaving to cool completely on wire racks. Do not cut into the rye bread until the following day.

SWEDISH NAVY RYE LOAF

Ankarstock (Sweden)

The name of this bread, *ankarstock*, refers to its shape, which was originally thought to be similar to that wooden top bit of an old anchor. In 1752 it was decided by royal decree that *ankarstock* was going to be a part of the rations on board the ships of the Swedish Navy. A single bread weighed exactly 1.7 kg/3¾ lb and made up a full two-day ration for a soldier. They were baked at Kronobageriet, a bakery in central Stockholm (on the corner of Riddargatan and Sibyllegatan) owned by the armed forces. *Ankarstock* was produced in the same building until the bakery was decommissioned in 1958. At its height the bakery produced 60,000 loaves a day.

Preparation and rising time: 3 days
Cooking time: 70 minutes
Makes: 2 loaves

Day 1
25 g/1 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
100 g/3½ oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) fine
  rye flour

Day 2
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (4 cups plus 1 tablespoon)
  fine rye flour

Day 3
butter, to grease
15 g/½ oz (1 tablespoon) salt
100 ml/3½ fl oz (¼ cup) dark syrup
150 g/5 oz (1¼ cups) fine rye flour
380 g/13½ oz (2¾ cups plus 1 tablespoon)
  strong wheat flour, plus extra for dusting

Day 1
Dissolve the yeast in 100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) body temperature (37°C/98.6°F) water in a bowl. Add the flour, then cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave at room temperature for 24 hours.

Day 2
Melt the butter in a pan, then add 700 ml/24 fl oz (3 cups) water and heat to body temperature (37°C/98.6°F). Mix the warm butter and water mixture and the rye flour with the sourdough from day 1. The dough should be loose and sticky. Leave to rise overnight, or for at least 8 hours.

Day 3
Butter two 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pans. Add the syrup and both flours to the sourdough from day 2, then transfer the mixture to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook and knead until the dough is smooth and sticky.

Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter, cut it in half and shape it into 2 loaves. Put the loaves into the prepared loaf pans, cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Bake the loaves for 70 minutes, then immediately remove from the oven and take them out of the loaf pans. Wrap them in clean dish towels and leave to cool down completely. Do not cut the bread until the next day.

PINE BARK (*PINUS SYLVESTRIS*)

In all parts of the Nordic region, in times of famine and poor harvest people have padded out their cereals with other things to make them last longer. In those regions where pine trees are abundant, pine bark flour has often been the material of choice. Especially in Finland, breads baked with pine bark had a strong tradition and historically have been eaten on a regular basis, not just when grains were not plentiful enough to last through the winter.

If you are interested in baking pine bark bread, the first step is to chop down a pine tree in early spring. You then need to strip away the inedible outer bark, and harvest the light-green inner bark – the phloem – from the wood by scraping it off with a knife or another sharp instrument. The outer bark is discarded, the wood is chopped up and dried into firewood and the strips of phloem are hung up to dry somewhere warm (some people also lightly toast their phloem).

When completely dry, the phloem is ground and sifted into a fine flour, which is mixed with cereal grain flour in proportions of roughly a quarter to a third. The pure bark flour will contain about 80 calories per 100 g/3½ oz, compared with wheat flour, which contains well over 300 calories per 100 g/3½ oz.

Pine bark flour is available for purchase in some health food stores.

RYE AND PINE BARK BREAD

Pettuleipä (Finland)

I quite like the slightly bitter and almost spicy flavour of this bread, and I do think that it suits the Finnish style of rye bread especially well. If you want, you can substitute up to a third of the amount of flour in any bread recipe with pine bark flour to see what happens.

For this recipe, I think that the easiest way to add the pine flour in the correct quantity is to weigh out 1.5 kg/3¼ lb (11½ cups) coarse rye flour and 500 g/1 lb 2 oz pine bark flour. Mix them together thoroughly and then use in the recipe below.

Preparation and resting time: 4 days
Cooking time: 45–60 minutes
Makes: 2 cakes

Day 1
120 g/4 oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons) mixed rye and pine bark flour
5 g/⅛ oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)

Day 2
10 g/¼ oz (2 teaspoons) salt
220 g/7¾ oz (1⅔ cups) mixed rye and pine bark flour

Day 3
330 g/11½ oz (2½ cups) mixed rye and pine bark flour

Day 1
Mix 175 ml/6 fl oz (¾ cup) water with the rye and pine bark flour and yeast in a big bowl. Leave overnight at room temperature. Do not cover the bowl, as you want the *lactobacillus* in the room to work on the dough, together with what's present in the flour.

Day 2
Add the flour and another 330 ml/11 fl oz (1¼ cups plus 2 tablespoons) water and more flour and mix well. Cover and leave overnight again.

Day 3
Check the starter dough to make sure that you have plenty of active fermentation. Is it frothing? Taste it to make sure you have *lactobacilli* in there, creating lactic acid. Does it taste fresh and acidic? If the answer to both these questions is yes, then proceed with the recipe.

To finish the dough, add the salt and the rest of the flour and transfer to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook. Knead for some time. It might take up to 30 minutes on medium speed, depending on the efficiency of your mixer. The dough should be sticky, dense and shiny. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave the dough at room temperature until doubled in size.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. With wet hands transfer the dough to a floured work counter and divide it into 2 equal pieces. Shape them into round cakes, then poke a hole in the middle of each cake and expand the hole to a diameter of about 4.5 cm/1¾ inches. Still with wet hands, smooth the surface of each cake – it should look silky. Dust the cakes lightly with flour and transfer them to the prepared baking sheets. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise. It can take a couple of hours and they should be almost but not quite doubled in size when ready to bake.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6.

Prick the cakes with a fork before baking. It will take longer than you think, I would guess about 1 hour and, since the cakes are already a dark colour, using colour to indicate doneness is dangerous. I prefer to cook until the cakes have a core temperature of about 96°C/205°F. When the cakes are done, wrap them immediately in clean towels and leave them to the next day to cool and slowly soften, before cutting into them.

RYE AND WHEAT FLAT LOAVES / CAKES

Hålkakor (Sweden)

These delicately soft-crusted breads are, as far as I know, only eaten fresh as part of a sandwich these days. Seeing them in that light, the fact that there is a hole punched into the middle of them and that they are called hole cakes in Swedish makes little sense. Historically, the hole was made so that a rod could be pushed through them to facilitate the hanging of these breads for storage. Even though they were surely eaten fresh back then, they were also stored and probably eaten all through their stages of stale and dryness. Towards the end, perhaps, they were broken into pieces and eaten as a cereal with cultured milk or perhaps made into a broth or soup, which was more nourishing.

Hålkakor are sometimes seasoned with sweet spices like aniseed, fennel and caraway but equally often not. Feel free to use the whole amount of spices indicated if you want to but also to skip one or all of them if you prefer that.

The pieces that come out when you cut the holes in the middle of the cakes can be kneaded back into one more cake, but I prefer to bake them as they are and eat them hot from the oven with salty butter as a treat.

Preparation and cooking time: 40 minutes
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 6 cakes

50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) milk, heated to body temperature (37°C/98.6°F)
1 teaspoon finely ground aniseed
1 teaspoon finely ground fennel seeds
1 teaspoon finely ground caraway seeds
100 g/3½ oz (¼ cup) golden syrup
50 g/2 oz (¼ cup) sugar
120 g/4 oz (1 stick) butter, melted and cooled down a little
1.4 kg/3 lb (10 cups) Swedish rye/strong wheat flour (*rågsikt*), sifted or 840 g/1 lb 13½ oz (6 cups) strong wheat flour and 560 g/1 lb 4 oz (4¼ cups) rye flour, plus extra for dusting
15 g/½ oz (1 tablespoon) salt

Dissolve the yeast in the warm milk. Pour the liquid into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook. Add the remaining ingredients and knead on medium speed until a dough forms. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes, or until the dough has doubled in size.

Line 3 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the dough onto a lightly floured work counter and cut it into 6 equal pieces. Shape the pieces into neat balls and then roll them out into round cakes about 1 cm/½ inch in thickness. Use a 5-cm/2-inch cookie cutter to punch a hole through the middle before placing them on the prepared baking sheets. Knead the pieces left over from the punched holes and form into another cake. Cover with a dish towel and leave to rise for another 30 minutes, or until the dough has doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Bake the cakes for 15 minutes, or until golden. Leave to cool on a wire rack covered with a clean dish towel to prevent the crust from hardening.

SIFTED RYE AND WHEAT ROUNDS

Rågsiktskakor (Sweden)

I love these with butter and cheese. If there is a bread that qualifies for being *the* Swedish bread of Swedish breads I think this is the one.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 4 rounds

- 50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter
- 50 ml/1¾ fl oz (3½ tablespoons) neutral cooking oil
- 400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) milk
- 10 g/¼ oz (2 teaspoons) salt
- 140 g/4¾ oz (⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons) golden syrup
- 1 tablespoon fennel seeds, crushed
- 1 tablespoon aniseed, crushed
- 50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
- 375 g/13¼ oz (2½ cups plus 2 tablespoons) Swedish rye/strong wheat flour *(rågsikt)*, sifted or 225 g/8 oz (1⅔ cups) strong wheat flour and 150 g/5 oz (1 cup plus 2 tablespoons) rye flour
- 300 g/11 oz (2 cups plus 3 tablespoons) strong wheat flour, plus extra for dusting

Place the butter in a pot and melt it over a medium heat. Add the oil, milk, salt, golden syrup and spices and heat to body temperature (37°C/98.6°F), then remove the pot from the heat.

Pour the mixture into the bowl of a stand mixer together with the yeast and stir until fully dissolved. Add the flour and work with the dough hook for 5 minutes, or until the dough comes away from the edges of the bowl. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Transfer the dough to a lightly floured work counter and divide it into 4 equal pieces. Shape the pieces into balls. Roll each ball out to a round cake about 2 cm/¾ inch thick and place them on the prepared baking sheets. Cover with clean dish towels and leave to rise for another 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Prick the rounds with a fork and bake for 15 minutes, then leave to cool on the baking sheets.

Clockwise from top left: Stone Ground Wheat Breads from Åland (page 112); Basic Graham Bread (page 108); Graham Buns (page 119)

DRIED BREAD BAKED WITH BLOOD

Paltbröd (Sweden)

This is one of those preparations that used to fill a very important function in the days before refrigeration and industrialized food production. On a farm when a beast was slaughtered the whole animal needed to be prepared in different ways to keep, or be consumed more or less immediately. This is why we have charcuterie among many other things.

The blood – which is extremely perishable – was either eaten straight away in the form of, for example, Blood Pancakes (page 231), baked into black pudding, or turned into blood sausages. All of these keep for a little while. If people wanted to keep it for longer, pretty much the only option was to bake it into bread, which was then dried.

When eaten, the bread is soaked and subsequently cooked in a broth. It is very tasty and not as uncommon as some other techniques that were invented a long time ago out of necessity and for which there is now not really any practical motivation.

Commonly served with the bread are boiled potatoes, béchamel sauce, some slices of Fried Salt Pork (page 538) and Sugared Lingonberries (page 514).

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Rising time: 30 minutes
Resting time: 30 minutes
Drying time: depends on the humidity
Makes: 20 pieces

200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) blood (either pig or cow), strained
50 g/2 oz (¼ cup) lard
140 g/4¾ oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) golden syrup
25 g/1 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
2 tablespoons dried marjoram
1 tablespoon fennel seeds, crushed
1 tablespoon ground ginger
10 g/¼ oz (2 teaspoons) salt
300 g/11 oz (2 cups plus 3 tablespoons) strong wheat flour
300 g/10½ oz (2¼ cups) rye flour
150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) dark beer

Combine the blood, lard and golden syrup in a pot and warm it slowly and carefully to body temperature (37°C/98.6°F). Dissolve the yeast in some of the warmed liquid then return it to the pot.

Tip the warm liquid into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook. Add the marjoram, spices, salt and both flours. Knead at a medium speed until it is smooth, shiny and elastic.

Cover the bowl and leave the dough to rise for about 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the dough onto a lightly floured work counter and divide it into 20 equal pieces. Roll them into smooth, flat buns and transfer to the prepared baking sheets. Cover with clean dish towels and leave at room temperature for another 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Bake the buns until golden brown. Leave to cool on wire racks.

Leave the baked buns in the open air until completely dry – it might take several days depending on the humidity where you live, before storing them in an airtight container.

HOW TO SERVE BREAD BAKED WITH BLOOD

It's best to soak this bread in a really good and well-seasoned beef or pork stock or, even better, the cooking liquid from a ham or other brined meat, but otherwise, you can use 1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) water with 15 g/½ oz (1 tablespoon) salt added.

Preparation and cooking time: 15 minutes
Soaking time: at least 2 hours
Serves: 4

1 quantity Bread Baked with Blood and Dried (or 500 g/1 lb 2 oz purchased equivalent)
1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) good, tasty stock

Either break the breads into pieces or keep them intact, if you prefer. Put them in a large pot and pour on the stock, which should be warm enough to be liquid and not gelatinous. Leave them to soak for at least 2 hours, although if the bread is left whole it usually takes a bit longer. The bread must be completely soaked through before being cooked. You may have to turn them over a couple of times for an even soak.

Put the pot onto a low–medium heat and slowly bring to a simmer. Cook for about 10 minutes, then serve with or without the cooking liquid. If using stock, I like to serve it with the breads, but if it is salted water, perhaps not.

FINNISH SWEET-AND-SOUR LOAF

Setsuuri / Sötsur limpa (Finland)
Setsuuri / Sötsur limpa (Sweden)

This iconic Finnish loaf originates from the area around the city of Turku but is today found almost everywhere in the country. It is also found, from time to time, in Swedish bakeries having been brought here by Finns living here. If you search the internet or look this recipe up in other printed media you will find a huge variation in style and content. The recipe below is to be considered a basic recipe and the important characteristics of the Finnish sweet-and-sour loaf, regardless of the recipe, are the following: a balanced but pronounced sweet and sourness, most often from using cultured milk and a generous amount of golden syrup in the dough; a pronounced note of sweet spices, most commonly caraway and aniseed but quite often also bitter orange peel; and a dark and shiny exterior from being brushed with syrupy water. It can sometimes be a little sticky to the touch.

The Finnish Christmas loaf, called *Jullimpa / Joulimppu*, is made by adding a couple of handfuls of raisins to the recipe below.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Rising time: 1–2 hours
Makes: 2 loaves

50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) cultured milk, at room temperature
250 g/9 oz (¾ cup) golden syrup, plus 2 tablespoons for the syrupy water
15 g/½ oz (1 tablespoon) salt
½ tablespoon aniseed, ground
½ tablespoon caraway seeds, ground
½ tablespoon dried bitter orange peel, ground
420 g/14¾ oz (3 cups plus 1 tablespoon) strong wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
400 g/14 oz (3 cups plus 1 tablespoon) rye flour, sifted

Dissolve the yeast in the cultured milk in the bowl of a stand mixer. Add the syrup, salt, spices and orange peel. Add the two flours and work with the dough hook for about 10 minutes, or until smooth and shiny. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave the dough to rise at room temperature for 30–60 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Line 1–2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Shape the leavened dough into 2 loaves on a lightly floured work counter. Transfer them to the prepared baking sheets, cover and again leave to rise for 30–60 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4.

To make the syrupy water, mix the golden syrup with 100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) water in a bowl until thoroughly combined.

Bake the loaves in the oven for about 1 hour or until done. After 20 minutes, open the door of the oven and brush the surface of the loaves with syrupy water. Repeat after 35 minutes and again after 50 minutes. When the loaves are taken out of the oven and are still hot, brush them one last time with the syrupy water and allow them to cool completely on wire racks before cutting into them.

For image see page 113

RYE AND GRAHAM BREADS FROM ÅLAND / BLACK BREAD

Mustaleipä / Svartbröd (Finland)
Svartbröd (Sweden)

This dense and flavourful round loaf of rye and graham flours is a traditional speciality from the islands of Åland, located in the Baltic Sea between Sweden and Finland. It is prepared over several days, the amylase enzymes in the malt breaking down the starch into sugars that ferment and ultimately make the dough quite acidic from the activity of both *lactobacillus* and a little acetobacter.

Sometimes the Åland bread is started with a Finnish cultured milk called *surmjölk*, and at other times, with water. The recipe below uses water and I do think that is the more traditional way. If you want to try using cultured milk, you will have to omit the scalding stage of the dough on the first day, as you can't boil the milk without curdling it.

The baking of the bread is divided into two stages: the raw dough is first baked in the same way as any other bread, and it is then tightly wrapped in aluminium foil for a secondary longer bake at a lower temperature for an extended time. This causes the starches and sugars to caramelize throughout the bread, creating a very characteristic flavour and appearance. Today you simply set the oven to the desired temperature, but in the old days I assume this technique was executed by leaving the loaves in the slowly cooling brick oven overnight, after the baking was done and the fires had gone out.

Preparation and resting time: 2 days
Baking time: 6½ hours
Makes: 4 loaves

Day 1
First mix
100 g/3½ oz (¾ cup) ground rye malt
200 g/7 oz (1½ cups) coarse rye flour

Second mix
100 g/3½ oz (¾ cup) ground rye malt
200 g/7 oz (1½ cups) coarse rye flour

Third mix
50 g/2 oz (¾ cup) ground rye malt
200 g/7 oz (1½ cups) coarse rye flour

Last addition
25 g/1 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)

Day 2
600 g/1 lb 5 oz (4¼ cups) graham flour, plus extra for dusting
250 g/9 oz (⅔ cup plus 1 tablespoon) golden syrup
20 g/¾ oz (4 teaspoons) salt

To brush the baked breads
2 tablespoons golden syrup
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) hot strong coffee

Day 1
Make the starter dough. In a large pot, heat 400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) water to 40°C/105°F. Pour into a large heatproof bowl with the first mix ingredients and stir together until smooth.

Tip on the second mix ingredients, then cover the bowl and leave it to rest in a warm spot for about 20 minutes.

Pour on 400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) boiling water and stir again until the mixture is smooth. Top with the third mix ingredients, then cover again and rest in a warm spot for another 20 minutes.

Pour on another 400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) boiling water and mix until smooth. Cover and rest in a warm spot for a further 20 minutes.

Dissolve the yeast in 50 ml/2 fl oz (3 tablespoons) water and add to the dough. Mix in thoroughly, then cover and leave at room temperature to ferment overnight.

Day 2
Transfer the starter dough to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook. Add the graham flour, syrup and salt and knead at a medium speed for about 10 minutes, or until it is smooth, shiny and elastic.

Cover the bowl and leave the dough at room temperature until doubled in size.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the dough onto a floured work counter and divide it into 4 equal pieces. Shape each piece into a rough ball and then roll them into round flat cakes, about 1.5 cm/¾ inch thick. Transfer the cakes to the prepared baking sheets, cover and leave to rest at room temperature until they have almost doubled in thickness.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7.

Bake for about 20 minutes, or until done. While the loaves are baking, mix the syrup with the hot coffee. Take the loaves out of the oven and brush them quite liberally all over with the coffee syrup. Stack them in pairs, with the top sides together, and wrap tightly in aluminium foil or lightly moistened paper towels.

Lower the oven temperature to 110°C/225°F/Gas Mark ¼. Return the wrapped loaves to the oven and bake for 6 hours. You will see when you take them out that they will have darkened considerably. This is normal and is what gives this bread its special flavour and appearance. Stack the loaves on their sides and wrap tightly in a blanket. This will mean the cooling process takes longer and it will further sweeten the bread. Traditionally the loaves are left for 2 days wrapped in blankets before being touched. These black breads will keep for months and the flavour will deepen with time.

FINNISH POTATO AND RYE LOAF

Perunalimppu (Finland)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour 50 minutes
Resting time: 12 hours
Makes: 3 loaves

1.5 kg/3¼ lb floury potatoes, peeled
300 g/11 oz rye malt, ground
3 kg/6½ lb (22¾ cups) coarse rye flour
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
30 g/1 oz (1¾ tablespoons) salt
butter, to grease

Place the potatoes in a pot, cover them with water, then cover with a lid and bring to the boil. Lower the heat to a brisk simmer and cook until the potatoes are done. Drain the potatoes but keep all of the cooking liquid for later. Immediately rice the potatoes with a ricer into a large bowl, add the reserved cooking liquid and leave to cool until the potato mix reaches 60°C/140°F.

Add the rye malt and 500 g/1 lb 2 oz (3¾ cups) of the rye flour to the cooled potato mixture and mix well. Cover the bowl with clingfilm (plastic wrap) and then cover with a thick blanket to retain the heat. Leave to rest overnight in a warm place. The temperature needs to be kept high to ensure the enzymes in the rye malt break down the starch in the potatoes as efficiently as possible.

The next day, dissolve the yeast in 100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) water then pour the mixture into the bowl of potato and flour. Add the salt and the remaining rye flour and work well with your hands until it is a heavy but supple dough. Cover and leave to rise for 2 hours, until doubled in size.

Butter three 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pans. Tip the dough out onto your work counter and divide it into 3 equal pieces. Place the pieces into the prepared loaf pans and leave to rise for another 1½ hours.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Bake the loaves for 1 hour, then leave to cool on wire racks.

FINNISH MALT LOAF

Saaristolaisleipä / Mallaslimppu/(Finland)
Skärgårdslimpa /Maltlimpa (Sweden)

The name in Finnish simply means malt loaf, while most Swedish-speaking Finns will call this bread *Skärgårdslimpa*, which means 'Archipelago loaf', alluding to its presumed origins of the country's coastal regions. Loaves like these are mostly baked with apple juice today, but some recipes use the juice of other fruits, even oranges. Speaking to Kenneth Nars who has helped me to find my way around the Finnish baking recipes, it seems this is likely a fairly recent development and older versions would have been baked using water.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Resting time: 1¾ hours
Makes: 3 loaves

1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) apple juice, at body temperature (37°C/98.6°F)
100 g/3½ oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
420 g/15 oz (1¼ cups) golden syrup, plus 3 tablespoons for brushing
1 tablespoon salt
180 g/6½ oz (1⅓ cups) crushed malt
150 g/5 oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) wheat bran
175 g/6 oz (1⅓ cups) coarse rye flour
900 g/2 lb (7½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
butter, to grease

Add the apple juice and yeast to a large bowl and stir until the yeast has completely dissolved. Add the remaining ingredients and mix well to a sticky and loosely porridge-like texture. Leave the dough to rise for 1 hour, or until it has doubled in size.

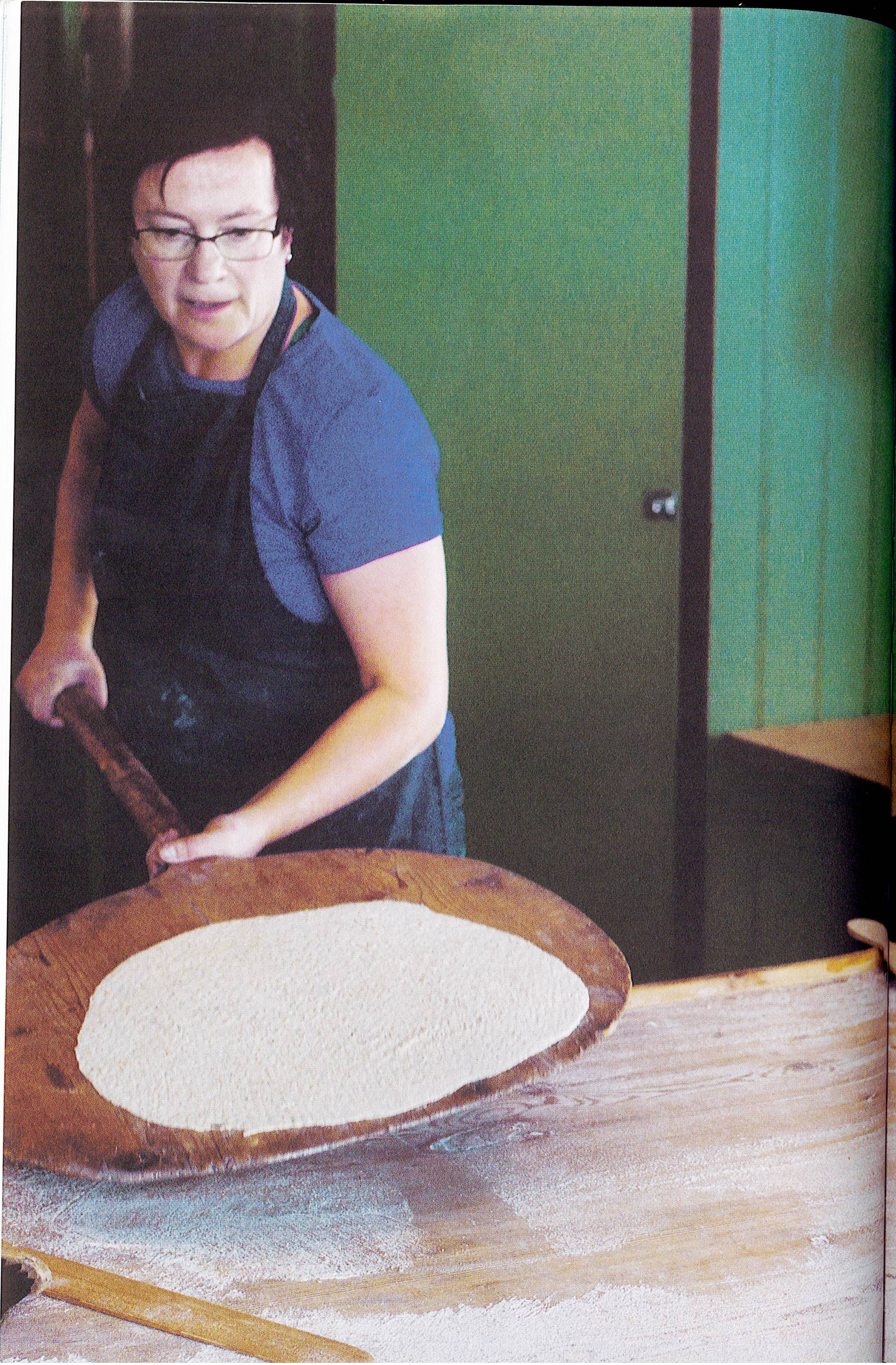
Butter three 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pans.

Tip the dough out onto a work counter and divide it into 3 equal pieces. Place the pieces in the prepared loaf pans, cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 45 minutes, or until they have doubled in size.

Mix the golden syrup for brushing with 1 tablespoon water in a bowl and set aside.

Preheat the oven to 250°C/480°F/Gas Mark 9. Bake the breads for 10 minutes, then reduce the oven temperature to 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2 and open the oven door to quickly brush the top of the breads with some of the golden syrup mixture before closing again and baking the breads for another 45 minutes. Remove the loaves from the oven, take them out of the pans and leave to cool on wire racks. Immediately brush the tops again with the rest of the syrup and water mixture.

FLATBREADS



Chapter title page: My mum and aunt making flatbread, Sweden, winter 2013.

Flatbreads in Western culture today are often seen as a bit of a minority type of bread, probably because we see most of the world's flatbreads (like tortillas from Mexico or *maaneesh* from the Middle East) not as breads but something else, perhaps as part of a dish. The fact is that in the context of history, loaves in the form of bread have always been seen as the anomaly and flatbreads the norm, simply for practical reasons. If we were to sum up everything made from a mix of something starchy and a liquid that is then baked or griddled, I have a feeling that flatbreads would still come out ahead. There are a couple of reasons why fluffy loaves are common in certain parts of the world though, and the opposing forces of these reasons are what make flatbreads popular elsewhere. Firstly, in the parts of the world (or somewhere close by) where loaves are common, wheat has been a big cereal crop for a long time. Secondly, in all parts of the world where loaves are the preferred choice of bread there are large enough centres of populations present to sustain bakeries.

The first one is pretty obvious as there's not enough potential to develop sufficient gluten in any cereal crop other than wheat to make nice loaves, and even if we can move flour around the world as much as we want today, this has not been the case for very long. The second reason has to do with 'eatability' and tastiness in relation to practicality. As we all know, a loaf of wheat bread is pretty much only good when it is fresh, let's say for a day or two after it's been baked. Hence, people won't eat old bread if they can avoid it meaning that we need bakeries to continuously supply fresh loaves for them to become an everyday commodity. One could argue that you could, of course, bake your own loaf every day, but most people today are not prepared to do so, and most people historically couldn't simply because they didn't have an oven in their home. Before the invention and popularization of the iron stove in the mid-nineteenth century, the only way to bake anything was in a huge stone oven. These ovens were only really seen in bakeries, very rich city homes/manors/castles or at farms in the countryside where there was plenty of space and firewood to fuel them. These two factors historically made bread from wheat popular in regions where wheat grows, and loaves made from wheat were mostly baked in cities within those regions.

In the Nordics this means that wheat loaves would mostly be seen in the southern parts of Scandinavia, such as the southernmost third of Sweden, all of Denmark plus some larger cities in Norway and Finland. Those living elsewhere in this large region mostly ate other types of breads that made use of different grains, and which would store better.

The most common grain grown in marginal climates where wheat doesn't thrive is barley. This grain doesn't contain a lot of gluten-forming proteins and therefore performs very poorly in loaves, but coincidently it is perfectly suited for rolling out very thin, flat rounds of bread. Another factor in the historical popularity of flatbread is that they are practical. These days, soft flatbreads dominate as they can be frozen and stored indefinitely in plastic bags, but in the old days most flatbreads were dried after baking and stored for a long time before being either eaten as sandwiches or rehydrated as part of a savoury dish.

Most families living on farms in the countryside would bake perhaps twice a year. Once after the harvest in late autumn (fall) and once in spring when whatever was baked and placed in storage was running out. Even if it is no longer a part of the necessity of life, this is still something that influences people's way of living. My own family, for example, all get together twice a year to bake flatbreads, once before Christmas and once for Easter. The reason why people didn't bake more often was simply because it was a lot of work and also costly in terms of the amount of firewood required to get the large oven hot. It was more rational in terms of production to bake a couple of times a year and to bring the whole extended family in to make large quantities.

Another interesting example is Norway, where for the most part, firewood is less abundant than in Sweden and Finland simply because of the coastal geography. If you weren't really rich it would be unthinkable to waste perhaps a cubic metre of firewood, which could heat your house for weeks, simply to use in an oven to bake some bread. Thanks to this, the Norwegian flatbread (*lefse*) culture is largely based on the use of a griddle, which of course is more economic to heat up and use.

How to prepare a traditional wood-fired flatbread oven

In the evening on the day before or early in the morning on the same day you are going to bake, fire the flatbread oven up using nicely cured birch wood. The bottom of the oven should be completely covered by embers for at least 4 hours before the baking can start.

When the time has come to bake, rake the embers to the sides of the oven and place them in a U-shape. Clean the bottom of the oven so that it is free from any soot using a damp birch twig brush.

Keep a piece of firewood burning on top of the embers on each side of the oven at all times. If you bake for more than an hour you have to take a ten-minute break and cover the bottom of the oven in embers again to ensure an even heat.

There are no ovens fired hotter, as far as I know, than those in which thin Scandinavian flatbreads are baked. Some of the instructions will be difficult to execute the first time you do it because of the intense heat, but if you persevere you will get used to the heat and get the hang of the technique.

What if I don't have a huge wood-fired stone oven or a traditional Norwegian flatbread griddle?

As this is a documentary book, it has been very important to me to reproduce the recipes the way they are actually executed where they originate. I don't want to give you a bunch of already modified recipes, as this would make the documentary Nordic baking book a lie.

That said, I realize that a baking book from which almost no one can bake, because they haven't dedicated a quarter of their house or a whole garage to the construction of the necessary oven, is hardly a good idea either. As I have said many times in the book, I think it's perfectly fine, or even good, if you adapt the recipes to suit yourself and the circumstances under which you might cook and bake.

For this flatbread chapter, with all its specialized ovens and griddles, there is one method for cooking them all in your home, and this is to use a frying pan (skillet). An ordinary frying pan over a medium–high heat will do the same as a traditional flatbread griddle except that it is much smaller so you have to figure out the scaling of all of the measurements of the breads yourself to fit your particular pan. An ordinary frying pan over a medium–high heat will not do the same thing as a wood-fired flatbread oven, but it will cook the dough, and even if the result won't be exactly right, it will be tasty so it's worthwhile doing.

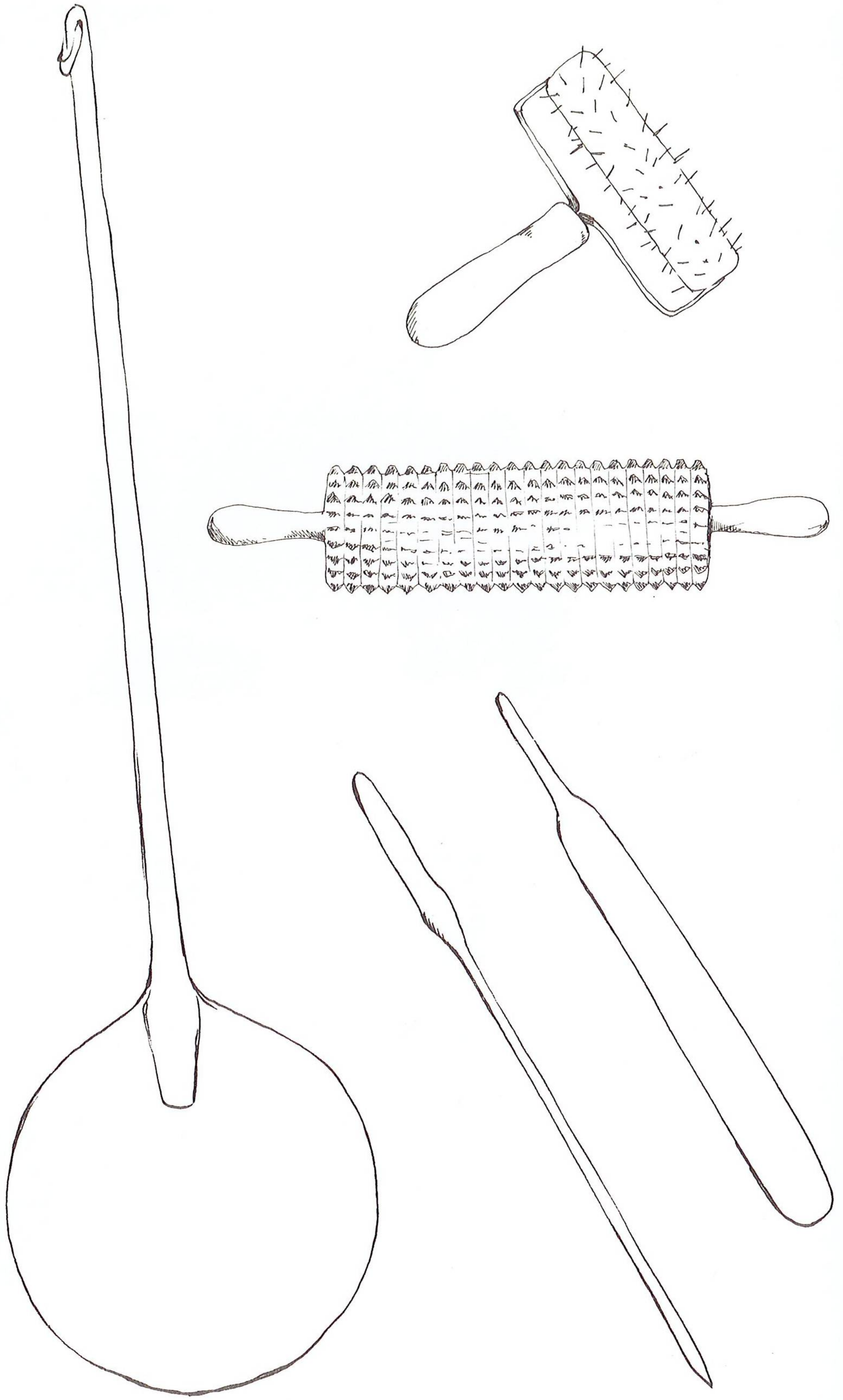
Alternatively, heat a pizza oven to as high as it goes or preheat your kitchen oven to 250°C/500°F/Gas Mark 9 (or to its highest temperature) and bake the flatbread on a preheated heavy baking sheet.

In the recipes for griddled flatbreads it's written in the method if they need cooking on both sides. For flatbreads traditionally baked in a stone oven, the construction of the oven means that they will cook from both sides at the same time. If you use a frying pan you will need to flip it over. Oh, and there should be no fat in the frying pan when cooking. A cast-iron pan is also much better than a nonstick one as the nonstick surface tends to melt if it sits on the stove for too long without anything wet and cold in there to cool it down.

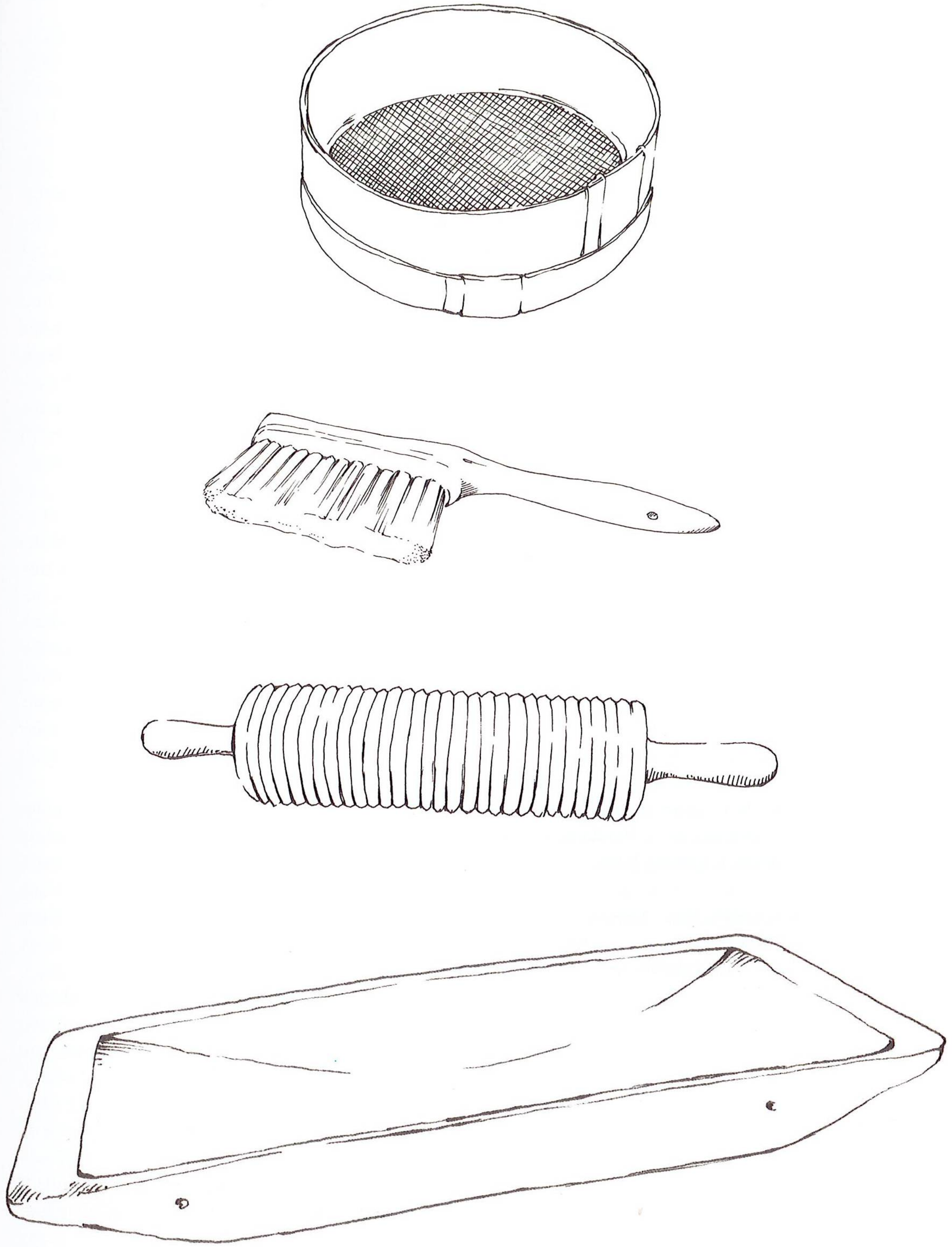
What about the other weird utensils traditionally used for making flatbreads?

To make traditional flatbreads we use a whole range of specialized equipment, which you will find illustrated on pages 158–9. They all serve a specific purpose, which should be explained by the way they look and the way the recipe method describes their use. I am sure you can find something else that will do the job if not equally well, at least just fine.

Opposite: Soft flatbreads and butter, Jämtland, Sweden, summer 2017.



Clockwise from top right: naggkavel (knobbed rolling pin); kruskavel (knobbed rolling pin); spatula; spjålk (baking stick); fjäl (bread peel)



Top to bottom: sikt (wooden sieve); soft flour brush; randkavel (striated rolling pin); tråg (wooden baking trough)

SWEDISH SOFT OR HARD FLATBREADS

Mjukbröd / Tunnbröd (Sweden)

These flatbreads are really important childhood memories for me. When you bake them and fire up the big wood-fired flatbread oven, the whole extended family will seize the opportunity to come and bake together. Baking flatbreads like these is not something we do often, usually twice a year, once before Christmas and once in the spring. I remember at my grandparents' farm, especially before Christmas, vast quantities were made. Up to a couple of hundred cakes each of soft and hard flatbreads in a day. When you are a kid the first task for which you assume responsibility is to start sweeping the excess flour off the rolled out cakes before they go into the oven. This is an important task as excess flour will easily burn and turn black in the superheated oven. The task reserved for the most seasoned veteran is the baking, often done by an older lady who has, over the years, gotten accustomed to the heat of the oven, which can reach over 400°C/750°F degrees. In a very hot oven, during full production, the baking of a single bread takes only about 25–40 seconds.

The difference between soft and hard flatbreads in Sweden is simply that the soft ones, which were historically meant to be eaten fresh as a treat after baking, are a bit thicker, while the hard ones are left to dry and stored for eating later.

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Rising time: 2¼ hours
Makes: 15 soft or 25 hard flatbreads

750 ml/25 fl oz (3 cups) milk
250 g/9 oz (2¼ sticks) butter
280 g/10 oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons) golden syrup
1 tablespoon ground aniseed
1 tablespoon ground fennel seeds
½ tablespoon ground coriander seeds
1.75 kg/3 lb 13½ oz (12¾ cups plus 1 tablespoon) strong wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
2 teaspoons baker's ammonia
15 g/1 oz (1 tablespoon) salt

For the first dough
25 g/1 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
750 ml/25 fl oz (3 cups) milk
750 g/1 lb 10 oz (5½ cups) Swedish rye/strong wheat flour (*rågsikt*), sifted or 450 g/1 lb (3¼ cups) strong wheat flour, and 300 g/11 oz (2⅓ cups) rye flour

Fire up a traditional wood-fired flatbread oven following the instructions on pages 151–3.

Dissolve the yeast in the milk for the first dough in a bowl, add the rye and strong wheat flour and mix until smooth and very sticky. I usually do the mixing at this point with my hand or with a large wooden spoon but it works fine using a stand mixer too. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave the first dough somewhere warm (20–24°C/68–75°F) to rise for about an hour, or until doubled in size.

Combine the milk and butter in a pan and heat to 35°C/95°F, or until the butter has melted. Add the syrup and the spices to the milk and pour the mix into the bowl containing the first dough. Mix until combined then add the remaining flour, baker's ammonia and salt together. Work the dough for about 10 minutes by hand or 5 minutes in a stand mixer. It should be very sticky and quite loose. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for about 45 minutes, or until again doubled in size.

Tip the dough onto a heavily floured work counter and divide it into 15–25 equal pieces, depending on whether you are making soft or hard flatbreads. Shape them into equal balls without incorporating any excess flour into the dough. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rest for another 25 minutes.

Flour the work counter generously and roll each dough ball into a round flatbread – about 3 mm/⅛ inch in thickness if you are making soft ones, and as thin as possible if you are making hard ones – using a *randkavel* (a striated rolling pin, see illustration page 159). Roll the round again, once in each direction, using a *naggkavel* (a knobbed rolling pin) to prick it and to prevent it turning into a pita pocket when it is baked. Use a soft flour brush (see illustration, page 159) to gently remove any excess flour from the flatbread.

Insert a *spjälk* (page 158) under the thin sheet of dough, slightly off centre before carefully lifting it onto the *fjäl* (bread peel, page 158), inverting it in the process so that the side without flour ends up at the bottom. Once again use the brush to carefully remove any excess flour from this side of the dough. Slide it off the peel in the centre of the oven, then using a stick, rotate it so that it cooks evenly all round. If you are too slow doing this it will burn towards the back of the oven. Bake until bubbly and just beginning to blacken around the edges. Transfer the flatbread to a wire rack and using the soft brush, give it a third and final sweep to remove any remaining flour.

Fold and bag immediately once they have cooled if you are making soft flatbreads or leave them out on a wire rack to dry if you are making hard ones.

For image see page 181

SOFT WHEAT AND RYE CAKES / HÖNÖ CAKES

Hönökaka (Sweden)

These slightly thicker, quite sweet flatbreads are named after Hönö Island just outside of Gothenburg on the Swedish west coast.

Hönökaka are usually sold in halves and are a traditional form of bread baked by the families of the fishermen in the region. Historically, they were, like many other flatbreads, baked with a hole in the middle so that they could be hung up to dry. Now they are mostly consumed fresh and soft as a sandwich. Today most *hönökaka* sold is baked commercially and it can be a challenge to find a good quality version to buy. The chances of finding authentic examples will be best around big family holidays, like Christmas, when people sell them in open-air markets and fairs.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Resting time: 45–55 minutes
Makes: 5 cakes

500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) milk
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter
70 g/2¾ oz (3 tablespoons) golden syrup
25 g/1 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
220 g/7¾ oz (1¾ cups) Swedish rye/strong wheat flour (*rågsikt*), sifted or 130 g/4½ oz (1 cup) strong wheat flour and 90 g/3¼ oz (⅔ cup) rye flour, plus extra for dusting
550 g/1 lb 4 oz (4 cups plus 1 tablespoon) strong wheat flour
15 g/½ oz (1 tablespoon) salt

Fire up a traditional wood-fired flatbread oven following the instructions on pages 151–3.

Combine the milk, butter and golden syrup in a pan and heat gently until the butter and syrup melt. Leave to cool to body temperature (37°C/98.6°F).

Dissolve the yeast in the milk and pour it into the bowl of a stand mixer and add the flours and salt. Knead with the dough hook at medium speed for 10 minutes, or until smooth and shiny. It will be quite sticky. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rest for 20–30 minutes.

Tip the dough out onto a floured work counter and divide it into 5 equal pieces. Shape them into equal balls without incorporating any excess flour into the dough. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rest for another 25 minutes.

Flour the work counter generously and roll each dough ball into a round cake, about 1 cm/½ inch thick. Roll the round again, once in each direction, using a *naggkavel* (a knobbed rolling pin) to prick it and to prevent it turning into a pita pocket when it is baked. Use a soft flour brush (see illustration, page 159) to gently remove any excess flour from the flatbread.

Transfer the rolled out and pricked cake onto a bread peel. Slide the *hönökaka* off the peel in the centre of the oven, then using a stick, rotate it so that it cooks evenly all round. If you are too slow doing this it will burn towards the back of the oven. Bake until golden.

For image see page 171

SOFT POTATO FLATBREADS FROM DALARNA

Mjukt Tunnbröd med potatis / Tuttul (Sweden)

There are many variations of soft flatbreads in Sweden in which ingredients other than flour milled from grain make up some part of the recipe. Some of the most noteworthy examples of this are *ärtbröd* (Soft Pea Flour Flatbreads, page 163) and the soft potato flatbreads described below, both most commonly seen in the central Swedish region of *Dalarna*. What a particular recipe looks like today is often dictated by what made sense historically. In this case it's easy to imagine that in this part of Sweden it was probably easier and safer to grow potatoes than grains. Or perhaps it was considered a way of minimizing risk to grow two kinds of crops for starch rather than just one.

The name of the potato bread, *tuttul*, which is quite commonly used today, is, in the same way as *stut* (page 207) for soft flatbreads from north Sweden, misused in the sense that both words really refer to a sandwich made from the bread rather than the bread itself. However, most people today use *tuttul* when talking about the actual bread, which can become a little confusing because you can use other types of bread when you make *tuttul* the sandwich, and *tuttul* the bread can only ever be a soft potato flatbread. One example is a soft flatbread called *stompa*, which is baked in a frying pan (page 152) and doesn't contain potato, but is sometimes referred to as *tuttul* in modern recipes. *Stompa* is popular in the same region as *tuttul* the bread and can definitely be made into *tuttul* the sandwich, but just as it is *stompa* the bread it is just *stompa* the bread. Nomenclature of breads is a serious and complicated matter.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Rising time: 1½ hours
Makes: 15 flatbreads

3.5 kg/7¾ lb potatoes
3 litres/101 fl oz (12½ cups) milk,
  at body temperature (37°C/98.6°F)
100 g/3 ½ oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (4½ sticks) butter
250 g/9 oz (1¼ cups) sugar
400 g/14 oz (1¼ cups) golden syrup
15 g/1 oz (1 tablespoon) salt
3 tablespoons fennel seeds
3 tablespoons aniseed
1 tablespoon caraway seeds
2 kg/4½ lb (16⅔ cups) plain (all-purpose)
  flour, plus extra for dusting
2 kg/4½ lb (16⅔ cups) fine rye flour

Fire up a traditional wood-fired flatbread oven following the instructions on pages 151–3.

Boil, peel and rice the potatoes. Leave to cool to room temperature. Pour the milk into a large bowl, add the yeast and stir until dissolved. Add all of the remaining ingredients, except the potato, and work the dough using your hands or a large wooden spoon for a few minutes until well combined and very sticky. Leave to rise for 1½ hours, or until just over doubled in size.

Add the riced potato and work it in thoroughly, using your hands or a large wooden spoon. After the potato has been added, the dough should not be allowed to ferment much more so you should immediately proceed to bake the bread.

Tip the dough onto a floured work counter and divide it into 15 equal pieces. Shape each piece into a ball without incorporating any excess flour into the dough. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rest for another 25 minutes.

Flour the work counter generously and roll each dough ball into a round cake, about 3 mm/⅛ inch, using a *randkavel* (a striated rolling pin, see illustration pag 159). Roll the round again, once in each direction, using a *naggkavel* (a knobbed rolling pin) to prick ot and to prevent it turning into a pita pocket when it is baked. Use a soft flour brush (see illustration, page 159) to gently remove any excess flour from the flatbread.

Insert a *spjälk* (page 158) under the thin sheet of dough, slightly off centre before carefully lifting it onto the *fjäl* (bread peel, page 158), inverting it in the process so that the side without flour ends up at the bottom. Once again use the brush to carefully remove any excess flour from this side of the dough. Slide it off the peel in the centre of the oven, then using a stick, rotate it so that it cooks evenly all round. If you are too slow doing this it will burn towards the back of the oven. Bake until bubbly and just beginning to blacken around the edges. Transfer the flatbread to a wire rack and using the soft brush, give it a third and final sweep to remove any remaining flour.

Fold and bag immediately once they have cooled.

SOFT PEA FLOUR FLATBREADS

Ärtbröd / Ärtbulla (Sweden)

All over Scandinavia various things besides flour have been added to flatbreads, as grains used to be a precious commodity, at least in the marginal climates further north of the region. The exact composition of recipes was most often dictated by the climate where it originated, which in turn dictated what crops the farmers could successfully grow. In the Swedish region of Dalarna, flatbread containing some pea flour in addition to wheat has always been, and is still today, common. Pea flatbreads can also be found in other parts of the country as well as in Norway, but it seems that adding peas to bread is considered to be a remnant of an historical necessity. In Dalarna it's a beloved part of their food culture as pea flour flatbreads were served at important family occasions, like weddings or at Christmas. Historically, pea flour was milled from local varieties of field peas, which were adapted to the local climate, but today most pea flour is made from ordinary peas grown elsewhere.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Rising time: 30 minutes
Makes: 15 flatbreads

350 g/12 oz (3 sticks) butter
1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) milk
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
15 g/1 oz (1 tablespoon) salt
60 g/2¼ oz (1⅔ cups) pea flour
250 g/9 oz (1¼ cups) sugar
1.2 kg/2½ lb (10 cups) plain (all-purpose)
  flour, plus extra for dusting

Fire up a traditional wood-fired flatbread oven following the instructions on pages 151–3.

Place the butter in a pot and melt it over a medium heat. Add the milk and heat until it is body temperature (37°C/98.6°F). Remove the pot from the stove, add the yeast and stir until it is completely dissolved. Pour this liquid into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook, add the remaining ingredients and work for 5 minutes, or until the dough is quite sticky and loose. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Tip the dough onto a lightly floured work counter and divide it into 15 equal pieces. Shape the pieces into balls without incorporating any excess flour into the dough.

Flour the work counter generously and roll each dough ball into a round cake, 4–5 mm/⅛–¼ inch thick, using *kruskavel* (a knobbed rolling pin) to prick them and to prevent them turning into pita pockets when baked. Use a soft flour brush (see illustration, page 159) to gently remove any excess flour from the flatbread.

Insert a *spjälk* (page 158) under the thin sheet of dough, slightly off centre before carefully lifting it onto the *fjäl* (bread peel, page 158), inverting it in the process so that the side without flour ends up at the bottom. Once again use the brush to carefully remove any excess flour from this side of the dough. Slide it off the peel in the centre of the oven, then using a stick, rotate it so that it cooks evenly all round. If you are too slow doing this it will burn towards the back of the oven. Bake until bubbly and just beginning to blacken around the edges. Transfer the flatbread to a wire rack and using the soft brush, give it a third and final sweep to remove any remaining flour.

Fold and bag immediately once they have cooled.

PEA FLOUR FLATBREADS

Ärtbröd (Sweden)

Big parts of the Nordic region are marginal climates for growing certain grains – especially wheat, essential to bake most breads. During years of poor crop growth people everywhere have found many ways of bulking out their precious cereals with other things to make them last longer. Adding dried and ground peas and beans to the dough has been quite common in many places, and in old recipes I have found that sometimes more than half the amount of flour made from grains was substituted with that of peas. The variety of pea that was used varied greatly depending on which was traditionally grown in the different regions. Today, however, most recipes use flour ground from ordinary yellow split peas.

These flatbreads can be baked either as thin rounds of about 5 mm/¼ inch thickness or thicker ones of about 1.5 cm/¾ inch. They are generally baked in a wood-fired, arched brick oven and the thicker the bread, the lower the temperature should be. A thick flatbread would preferably be cooked without actual flames but, rather, on the residual heat of the bricks themselves – perhaps after baking other, thinner flatbreads.

Some recipes contain seasonings like fennel seeds, aniseed, and/or caraway seeds but I prefer these flatbreads plain. It is also funny how the dough, which initially tastes bitter from the raw pea flour, transforms after cooking to a buttery sweetness that is quite special.

Pea breads are usually eaten fresh and soft on the day of baking, but I imagine that, historically, they were probably also dried and stored like most other breads of this type.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 5 large thin or 5 small thick flatbreads

350 ml/12 fl oz (1½ cups) milk
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter
10 g/¼ oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
75 g/2¾ oz (½ cup) pea flour
450 g/1 lb (3⅓ cups) strong wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
10 g/¼ oz (2 teaspoons) salt
1 tablespoon sugar

Fire up a traditional wood-fired flatbread oven following the instructions on pages 151–3.

Gently heat the milk and butter in a pan until the butter melts. Leave to cool to body temperature (37°C/98.6°F).

Dissolve the yeast in the milk and butter. Tip into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook, together with the rest of the liquid, the flours, salt and sugar. Knead at medium speed for about 30 minutes, or until smooth and very sticky. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave the dough to rise for about 1 hour, or until doubled in size.

Tip the dough onto a floured work counter and divide into 5 equal pieces. Shape each piece into a ball without incorporating any excess flour into the dough. Roll each ball out to a thin or thick round cake (depending on your preference) using a *randkavel* (a striated rolling pin, see illustration page 159). Roll the round again, once in each direction, using a *naggkavel* (a knobbed rolling pin) to prick them and to prevent them turning into pita pockets when baked. Use a soft flour brush (see illustration, page 159) to gently remove any excess flour from the flatbread.

Insert a *spjålk* (page 158) under the thin sheet of dough, slightly off centre before carefully lifting it onto the *fjäl* (bread peel, page 158), inverting it in the process so that the side without flour ends up at the bottom. Once again use the brush to carefully remove any excess flour from the dough. Slide it off the peel in the centre of the oven, then using a stick, rotate it so that it cooks evenly all round. If you are too slow doing this it will burn towards the back of the oven. Bake until golden.

SWEDISH HARD BLOOD FLATBREADS

Blodbröd / Tunnpaltbröd (Sweden)

This is a recipe almost no-one makes anymore. When I was growing up I remember the slightly sweet metallic blood smell of these being baked in my grandmother's kitchen. You can eat them like sandwiches with butter and cheese on top, or more commonly heat them in broth and serve them like a dish. This recipe is similar to the blood bread on page 140. Traditionally, this was an excellent way of preserving fresh blood from a slaughtered animal by turning it into a bread, which was subsequently dried for storage. They keep for more than a year and taste delicious.

Make 1 quantity Swedish Soft Flatbreads (page 160) substituting the milk for cow's or pig's blood but otherwise treated the same way.

Even though this is technically a flatbread that is destined to be dried, and would therefore be treated along the lines of a Swedish crispbread (page180), they are tastier if you make them a little thicker as in the soft flatbread recipe (page160).

After baking them, spread the flatbreads out on wire racks to dry completely – they usually need to be left overnight. Stack them and place them in a large paper bag until you want to use them. Be sure to keep the paper bag somewhere dry and cool.

For image see page 181

GRIDDLED SWEET NORWEGIAN FLATBREADS

Tynnlefse (Norway)

This is a thin and slightly sweet Norwegian griddled flatbread, which is spread with a kind of buttercream filling before being folded or rolled up and cut into pieces.

Tynnlefse is often served after a meal or as a sweet snack with coffee on the side.

This type of filled flatbread freezes really well with the filling inside so do keep some in the freezer if you can't eat it all at once.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Rising time: 40 minutes
Makes: 6 flatbreads, each enough for 6 pieces

For the dough
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter
5 g/⅛ oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) cultured milk
50 g/2 oz (¼ cup) sugar
350 g/12 oz (2¾ cups plus 1 tablespoon) plain (all-purpose) flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon baker's ammonia

For the filling
120 g/4 oz (1 stick) butter, at room temperature
120 g/4 oz (½ cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
75 ml/2½ fl oz (⅓ cup) cream
a pinch of salt

Melt the butter and allow to cool a bit.

In a bowl, dissolve the yeast into the cultured milk, add the butter and the sugar and stir well. Add the flour, baking powder and baker's ammonia together into the bowl. With your hands, work together to a firm but smooth dough, cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 40 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Tip the dough out onto a work counter and divide it into 6 pieces. Roll the pieces out into a round cakes about 3 mm/⅛ inch in thickness. Bake on an iron flat-top griddle over a medium heat until golden. Flip over and cook the other side until golden. Stack the cooked flatbreads and cover them up so that they don't dry while you make the filling.

Stir all of the ingredients for the filling together until creamy and white.

Place a flatbread on the work counter in front of you and brush it on both sides, evenly, with a very light coating of water. This is to save it from cracking when you fold it later. Spread an even layer of the filling onto the flatbread and fold 2 of the edges opposite to each other so they meet in the middle. Fold it once more and press down firmly. Repeat with all the remaining filling and flatbreads.

Before serving, cut each flatbread into 6 pieces of a convenient size to pick up and eat.

GRIDDLED SWEET NORWEGIAN FLATBREADS WITH GLAZE

Krinalefse (Norway)

This is probably one of my favourite Norwegian things to eat. Very rich, very delicious, and very difficult to make as they are baked twice and so easily dry out. Traditionally, the glaze is patterned with a tool made specifically for the purpose (see illustration, right), but a fork can also be used.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Rising time: 40 minutes
Makes: 3 flatbreads, cut into wedges

1 quantity Griddled Sweet Norwegian Flatbreads (page 165), left whole and with the filling being made but not yet used

For the glaze
4 eggs
1 tablespoon sugar
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) cream
1.5 litres/50 fl oz (6¼ cups) milk
1 tablespoon golden syrup
350 g/12 oz (2¾ cups plus 1 tablespoon) plain (all-purpose) flour

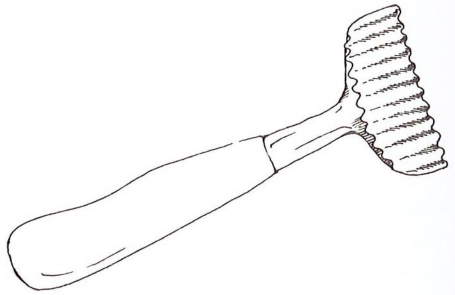
Preheat the oven to 250°C/480°F/Gas Mark 9 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

For the glaze, whisk the eggs and sugar together in a large bowl, then whip the cream to stiff peaks in a separate bowl. Add the whipped cream, milk and golden syrup to the egg and sugar mixture and stir until just combined. Sift in the flour and stir briskly using a stiff balloon whisk until the mixture is smooth and there are no lumps.

Spread the 6 flatbreads out on a flat work counter and divide the glaze among them, then spread the glaze out and pattern it using the traditional tool (see illustration above right) or a fork.

Using a very thin bread peel (pizza shovel), transfer a single glazed flatbread onto the prepared baking sheet and bake in the oven until the glaze has turned golden. Repeat the process with the remaining glazed flatbreads, then leave them to cool on wire racks. They will dry out during the cooking and cooling process. To finish them, they need to be rehydrated by being placed between damp paper towels until they soften around the edges.

Place one softened flatbread, glaze-side down on a work counter and spread with some of the filling from the flatbread recipe. Top with another flatbread, this time with the glazed-side facing up, then press down and cut into wedges. Repeat with the remaining glazed flatbreads and filling.



NORWEGIAN GRIDDLED SOFT POTATO FLATBREADS

Potetlefse / Potetlompe / Mjukbrød (Norway)

This Norwegian potato flatbread is popularly rolled around a hot dog with different fillings. They are also very tasty hot from the griddle lightly buttered and sprinkled with some sugar as a sweet snack. Another way of serving it is with Norwegian fermented trout.

The name depends a little on who you ask but a general consensus is that *potetlompe* is the smaller and slightly thicker version I have described in the method below. If it is called *mjukbrød* it is generally rolled out into a larger and much thinner cake, as thin as 5 mm/¼ inch. If you want to make the rolled out version you won't be able to lift it onto the hotplate by hand, you will have to roll them up on a special stick (see illustration, page 158) before rolling them out again onto the hot surface itself to cook them. *Mjukbrød* can in some parts of Norway also be something much more similar to Swedish Soft Flatbreads (page 160, but cooked on the electric hotplate rather than in the oven.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 10 cakes

1 kg/2¼ lb potatoes, boiled, peeled and cooled to room temperature
5 g/0.20 oz (1 teaspoon) salt
200 g/7 oz (1⅔ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour

Pass the potatoes together with the salt through a meat mincer (grinder) on the fine plate setting. Transfer to a bowl, add the flour, and work with your hands until firm but smooth in texture.

Preheat a large, round electric hotplate (see illustration page 172) or griddle, if using.

On a floured work counter, divide the dough into 10 pieces and press each one out with a floured hand to a round 3 mm/⅛ inch thick and 15–18 cm/6–8 inches in diameter. Prick with a fork all over and fry on the hotplate or in a large, dry frying pan over medium heat. Cook until golden on both sides. Stack them as they finish and cover with a clean dish towel so that they don't dry out too much while cooling.

For image see page 171

NORWEGIAN THICK FLATBREADS

Tjukklefse / Tykklefse (Norway)

This Norwegian flatbread is often served as a cake with coffee. The cinnamon in the filling is optional but quite common. Sometimes you see it simply with sugar and butter, or a drizzle of golden syrup.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Resting time: 1 hour
Makes: 12–15 flatbreads

500 g/1 lb 2 oz (3⅔ cups) strong wheat flour
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar
2 teaspoons baker's ammonia
1 teaspoon baking powder
5 g/0.20 oz (1 teaspoon) salt
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, melted
300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) cultured milk

For the filling
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
80 g/3 oz (¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

Mix the flour, sugar, baker's ammonia, baking powder and salt together in a bowl. Add the melted butter and milk and stir by hand until it is a firm dough. Leave the dough to rest in the refrigerator for about 1 hour. It will get easier to work with if you do.

Tip the dough out onto a work counter and divide it into 12–15 equal pieces. Roll the pieces out to about 5 mm/¼ inch thick. Bake them on an iron flat-top griddle over a medium heat. You can also bake them on a baking sheet in the oven preheated to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 for 3–5 minutes. Stack and cover the flatbreads with a clean dish towel while you make the filling.

Mix all of the ingredients for the filling together in a bowl. Take one thick flatbread and place it on the work counter in front of you. Spread it with the filling, put another flatbread on top and cut into triangular pieces. Repeat with the rest of the flatbreads and filling.

For image see page 171

FLATBREADS FROM HARDANGER

Krotekake / Hardangerkake (Norway)

In the Norwegian region of Hardanger, this thin flatbread – which can be both dry and crisp or fresh and soft – is known as *krotekake*. In other parts of Norway it is called *Hardangerkake*, bread from Hardanger. Traditionally this flatbread was cooked in a wood-fired, arched brick oven and was therefore not turned over during the baking. Today, however, most people cook *krotekake* on a flat electric hotplate (see illustration, page 172), which means that you need to cook it on each side separately.

Some recipes for *krotekake* combine wheat flour with rye flour, while others use a mixture of wheat, rye and barley flour, or even wheat and barley flour.

Krotekake are rolled out first with a smooth rolling pin and then with a disked and knobbed one, which is rolled away from you; then once straight across the first pattern of dimples – creating a pattern of small squares.

Krotekake is often eaten buttered and sugared. If it has been dried, to preserve it, it is sometimes moistened a bit before eating.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Rising time: 2 hours
Makes: 15 flatbreads

10 g/¼ oz (2 teaspoons) fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (4 cups plus 1 tablespoon) fine rye flour, plus extra for dusting
140 g/4¾ oz (1 cup) wholemeal (whole-wheat) flour
5 g/0.20 oz (1 teaspoon) salt

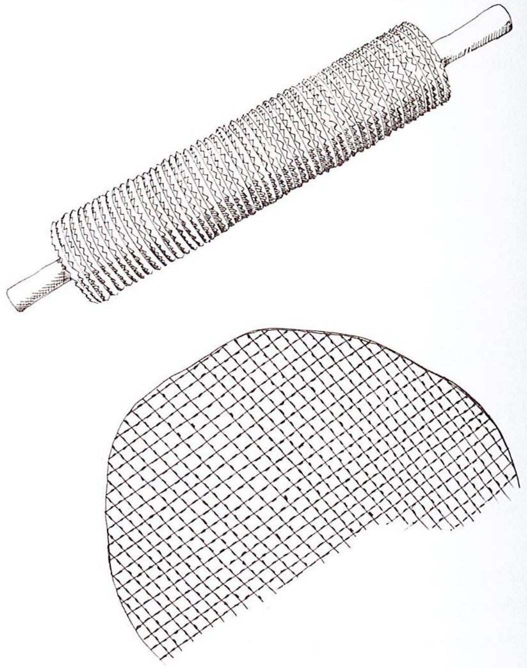
Dissolve the yeast in 400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) water the bowl of a stand mixer and add the flours and the salt. Knead with the dough hook at medium speed until smooth and shiny, which will take about 10 minutes. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave the dough to rise for 2 hours, or until doubled in size.

Tip the dough out onto a floured work counter and divide it into 15 equal pieces. Shape each piece into a round ball, keeping them covered with a clean dish towel while you work, so they don't dry out. You can be generous with the flour on your work counter, as you will brush it off later.

Roll each dough ball into a round, flat cake, 30–35 cm/12–14 inches in diameter. Use the Hardanger roller (see illustration below) to create the cross-hatch pattern on the surface of each flatbread.

Preheat a dry griddle, cast-iron frying pan (skillet) or electric hotplate. Or, if you have an old-fashioned wood-fired arched brick oven, then use this.

Brush any excess flour off the flatbreads (as this will burn) and fry them on both sides until golden around the edges. Stack the flatbreads in a pile, as they are done, weighting it with a wooden board to avoid excessive curling.



GRIDDLED RYE BREADS FILLED WITH SEMOLINA OR RICE PORRIDGE

Sultsina (Finland)

These Finnish stuffed flatbreads are a bit similar to the Karelian Pasties (page 208), except they are fried on a griddle before being filled and rolled up, instead of being stuffed and baked. They are made with either a semolina or rice porridge filling.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 20 breads

1 quantity rye dough from Karelian Pasties (page 208)
1 quantity rice porridge filling from Karelian Pasties (page 208) or 1 quantity Wheat Semolina and Milk Porridge (page 244)
salted butter, melted, to brush

Divide the dough into 20 balls and roll them into thin circles, as described in the Karelian pasties recipe on page 208.

Preheat a dry griddle, cast-iron frying pan (skillet) or electric hotplate. Fry the flatbreads on both sides until lightly coloured.

When all the flatbreads are cooked, brush them on one side with some salted butter and spread your choice of filling across the centre before rolling them up into little tubes. Brush them all over lightly with a little more butter and let them sit a bit at room temperature before you serve them.

ICELANDIC SOFT RYE FLATBREADS

Flatkökur (Iceland)

These slightly chewy, dense, griddled flatbreads are quite common in Iceland as the base for a sandwich. In older times they often had some ground Icelandic moss in them to stretch out the expensive imported flour. Historically, they were surely made with yeast or sourdough to leaven them, but today most recipes, like this one, contain baking powder.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 10 flatbreads

200 g/7 oz (1⅔ cups) rye flour
100 g/3½ oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) plain (all-purpose) flour, plus extra for dusting
3 g/0.10 oz (½ teaspoon) baking powder

Mix all of the ingredients together in a large heatproof bowl, then pour 250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) boiling water over the flour and stir briskly to mix it well. Knead until smooth, then divide and shape the dough into 10 equal balls.

On a lightly floured work counter, roll each ball out to a thin round about 5 mm/¼ inch thick. Prick with a fork and griddle each flatbread in a dry frying pan (skillet) over a quite high heat for about 1 minute on each side, or until well coloured. When griddled, dip each flatbread quickly in a bowl of cold water, then stack the finished flatbread together wrapped in a clean dish towel to prevent them from drying out.

ICELANDIC POTATO FLATBREADS

Kartöfluflatbrauð (Iceland)

This type of Icelandic flatbread, which is not terribly common anymore, is most often made when you happen to have leftover potatoes.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 10 flatbreads

200 g/7 oz potatoes, boiled, cooled, peeled and riced
3 g/0.10 oz (½ teaspoon) salt
120 g/4 oz (1 cup) rye flour
60 g/2¼ oz (½ cup) plain (all-purpose) flour, plus extra for dusting

Put the potatoes, salt and flours into a bowl, mix well and add just enough water for the dough to come together. Divide the dough into 10 equal pieces and shape the pieces into balls.

On a lightly floured work counter, roll each ball out to a thin round. Griddle them in a dry frying pan (skillet) over a quite high heat for 1 minute on each side, or until well coloured. Stack the flatbreads together wrapped in a clean, lightly moistened dish towel to prevent them from drying out.

ICELANDIC WHEAT CAKES FROM WESTFJORD

Vestfirskar hveitikökur (Iceland)

This is a slightly richer version of Icelandic Soft Rye Flatbread (page 169) made only with wheat.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Resting time: 30 minutes
Makes: 8 cakes

425 g/15 oz (3½ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour, plus extra for dusting
3 teaspoons baking powder
5 g/0.20 oz (1 teaspoon) salt
1 tablespoon sugar
250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) cream
250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) milk

Add all of the ingredients to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and work until fully combined. Leave the dough to rest for 30 minutes.

Tip the dough onto a floured work counter, divide it into 8 equal pieces and shape each piece into a ball. On a lightly floured work counter, roll each ball out into a round of about 5 mm/¼ inch in thickness. Griddle the rounds in a dry pan over a medium heat until golden on both sides, then leave the cakes to cool in a stack to prevent them from drying out.

SAMI SOFT FLATBREADS

Gaahkoeh / Gáhkku (Sami)
Glödkaka (Sweden)

These rather thick, soft flatbreads were traditionally baked by the semi-Nomadic Sami families of the Nordic region and they were a common source of carbohydrate, eaten with a hot main meal. As you could add the water on site where you were camping, you only had to bring the dry ingredients – very practical in the old days. Today these flatbreads are leavened with commercial yeast and are often quite fluffy. Historically I assume that they were leavened much like breads were traditionally, namely by naturally occurring strains of yeast during a much slower fermentation that gave a denser and less sweet bread.

They are still common but today, more so spread with butter and topped with something to make an open-faced sandwich. *Gaahkoeh* would traditionally be baked on a flat stone heated by fire, on a piece of sheet metal, or in a cast-iron frying pan.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Rising time: 45 minutes
Makes: 20 cakes

50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) water or reindeer broth
70 g/2¾ oz (3½ tablespoons) golden syrup
7 g/0.24 oz (1½ teaspoons) salt
50 ml/1¾ oz (3⅓ tablespoons) neutral cooking oil or rendered reindeer fat
800 g/1¾ lb (6⅔ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour, plus extra for dusting
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (4 cups plus 2 tablespoons) fine rye flour

Dissolve the yeast in the water or reindeer broth in a large bowl. Mix in all the remaining ingredients to form a sticky dough. Leave the dough to rise for about 45 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Tip the dough out onto a floured work counter and divide it into 20 equal pieces. Shape each piece into a ball. Roll out each ball into a small flat cake.

Cook the cakes over medium heat in a dry frying pan until golden on both sides.

For image see page opposite

Clockwise from top left: Sami Soft Flatbreads (page 170); Soft Wheat and Rye Cakes / Hönö Cakes (page 161); Norwegian Griddled Soft Potato Flatbreads (page 166); Finnish Milk Flatbreads (page 175); Norwegian Thick Flatbreads (page 167); Barley Groat Flatbreads (page 174)

NORWEGIAN CRISP FLATBREADS

Flatbrød (Norway)

This flatbread used to be one of the true staples of Norwegian food culture and is still widely consumed. It is different from most other Nordic flatbreads as it is unleavened and because it is baked on a flat-top griddle rather than in the oven, much like Norwegian *lefse*. Historically the electric hotplate was a hot stone, later it was a wood-fired cast-iron one and today it is most often electric.

The content varies greatly and is often a mix of whole-grain wheat and other grains like barley or oat, or potatoes, and in some parts of the country ground split peas. Allow for 50 per cent plain (all-purpose) flour to ensure an easier rolling out process for those unaccustomed to making *flatbrød*. Barley flour is good for rolling the cakes out in.

Historically, as with many other dry or crisp flatbreads in the Nordic region, Norwegian *flatbrød* was not baked very often but rather a couple of times a year and in large quantities. As it contains no fat and is dry it can be stored almost indefinitely in the right conditions.

Other *knäckebröd*-style crisp flatbread, which were historically more common in Sweden and Finland, are different from the Norwegian ones as they are most often leavened and baked in an oven.

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Resting time: overnight
Makes: 10–20 flatbreads, depending on the size of your griddle

650 g/1 lb 7 oz a mix of flours as described above
10 g/¼ oz (2 teaspoons) salt
couple of handfuls of barley flour to roll the breads out in

Place the flours and salt in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook.

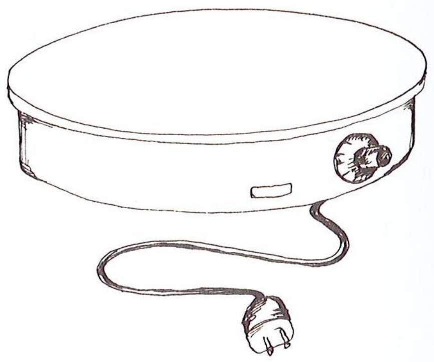
Bring 700 ml/24 fl oz (3 cups) water to a boil and pour it over the flour. Work the hot mixture in the stand mixer for about 10 minutes, or until firm. Wrap the dough in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and place it in the refrigerator overnight to rest.

Cut the dough into 10–20 equal-sized pieces and flatten each piece out as much as you can with your hands. Stack the dough discs to prevent them from drying out and cover the stack with some clingfilm as you are working.

Spread a layer of barley flour onto your work counter and start rolling one of the pre-flattened discs out. Ensure that it doesn't stick to the counter and keep it floured at all times. It should be very thin, barely millimetres in thickness. When you are satisfied with the thickness of the bread, carefully brush off the excess flour with a soft brush. This is important to make sure they cook well. Continue with the remaining pieces of dough.

Preheat a large, round electric hotplate (see illustration below) or flat-top griddle to medium.

Transfer a dough disc to the griddle. Place the side that was facing up when you were rolling it, face down on the hot griddle. As the flatbread is cooking, brush away any excess flour from the side now facing upwards. Once it is beginning to colour on the first side, flip it over. It doesn't have to cook until dry on the griddle. Continue with the remaining discs of dough. Place the cooked breads in a stack and weigh it down with something flat and heavy to keep it straight.



NORWEGIAN THIN CRISPBREADS BAKED FROM POTATO AND OATMEAL

Skjenning (Norway)

The name of this very thin, crisp flatbread comes from the Norwegian word for 'shiny'. This, in its turn, refers to the shiny surface of the bread that is brushed with milk and sugar after cooking.

Even though it is today made in other parts of the country (as the recipe has spread with people moving around), *skjenning* comes from a region called Innherred, located around the inner parts of the Trondheim fjord. If the *skjenning* is produced for sale it has to contain potatoes and oats from the Innherred region, otherwise it cannot bear the name *skjenning* as it has legal status as a protected regional speciality.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 40 crispbreads

500 g/1 lb 2 oz floury potatoes, boiled, peeled, pushed through a ricer and cooled to room temperature
250 g/9 oz (2 cups) fine oatmeal (or a mix of oatmeal and barley flour), plus extra for dusting
2 tablespoons sugar
200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) milk

Put the potato in a large mixing bowl. Add the oatmeal gradually, working until you have a smooth and elastic dough which is quite firm. How much oatmeal you need to add depends on the potato. It varies a lot, and the quantity stated above should serve as a rough guideline.

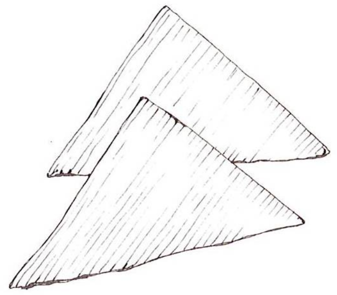
Preheat a large, round electric hotplate (see illustration, opposite) or griddle to medium.

Divide the dough into 5 equal portions. On a floured work counter, roll the first ball out thinly to the size of the hotplate. Finish the rolling with a knobbed rolling pin (see illustration, page 158) so that it doesn't fluff up into a balloon when heated. Brush off any excess flour with a soft brush (see illustration page 159).

Cook a *skjenning* cake over medium heat on one side only until the side facing the heat is a light golden colour.

Mix the sugar into the milk thoroughly. Brush one-fifth of the sweetened milk on the uncooked side of the *skjenning*, then remove from the heat.

Repeat with the remaining four dough balls. Once the *skjenning* have all cooled and are dry to the touch, trim the edges neatly and cut each one into 8 triangular pieces (see illustration, below). Stack and weight them, to ensure they do not curl up as they cool and dry. They should be pressed until completely dry and crisp.



SWEET NORWEGIAN FLATBREADS WITH BROWN CHEESE CREAM

Møsbrømlefse (Norway)

This is a speciality from the northern Norwegian region of Salten. It is, as opposed to most other *lefse*, most commonly served warm. It is folded into a sort of envelope with the brown cheese filling called *møsbrøm* inside. When eaten, pieces of the flatbread are torn off and dipped in *rømme* (Norwegian cultured cream) and golden syrup or sugar, which together are called *søvvel.*

Preparation and cooking time: 50 minutes
Makes: 20 lefse

For the filling
3 tablespoons plain (all-purpose) flour
1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) milk
6 tablespoons sugar
5 g/0.20 oz (1 teaspoon) salt
500 g/1 lb 2 oz Brown Cheese (page 537), grated on the coarse side of a box grater

For the flatbreads
1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) cultured milk
2 tablespoons baker's ammonia
2 tablespoons golden syrup
2 tablespoons butter
250 g/9 oz (2 cups) wholemeal (whole-wheat) flour
750 g/1 lb 10 oz (6¼ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour, plus extra for dusting
250 g/9 oz (2 cups) rye flour

To serve
søvvel (see intro)

For the filling, add the flour to a pan with some of the milk and stir until it is smooth and there are no lumps. Add the remaining ingredients, except the brown cheese, and bring to a simmer over a medium heat.

Add the grated cheese, little by little, taking care to melt what's been added before more goes in and stirring all the time so that it does not stick to the bottom of the pan and burn. When all the cheese has been added and melted, remove the pan from the heat and stir for another 2 minutes. Cover and set aside for later.

For the flatbreads, add all of the ingredients and 100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) water to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook and work for 5 minutes, or until the dough is smooth but sticky.

Tip the dough onto a floured work counter, divide into 20 equal pieces and shape into balls. Roll each one out thinly, about 3–5 mm/⅛–¼ inch thick.

Griddle in a frying pan over a medium heat until lightly coloured on both sides. As you cook your flatbreads, stack them on top of each other and cover the stack with a paper towel to prevent them from drying out and cooling down completely. Spread some of the filling onto each flatbread, and fold it first in half, then fold the corners into the middle like an envelope. Serve with *søvvel.*

BARLEY GROAT FLATBREADS

Ryynirieska (Finland)

This speciality from the Finnish region of Savonia is almost not even a bread, it's more like a porridgey savoury cake baked in the oven. Often served for lunch or as a lighter meal with Egg Butter (page 537), it's absolutely delicious.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Resting time: overnight
Makes: 1 big flatbread

1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) buttermilk
280 g/10 oz (1½ cups) crushed barley groats
2 teaspoons salt
2 eggs
80 g/3 oz (¾ cup) oat flakes
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter

Mix the buttermilk and barley groats together in a bowl and leave at room temperature overnight.

The next day, preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Add the rest of the ingredients to the buttermilk mixture from the day before and mix until combined. You don't need to use a stand mixer for this dough. Use your hands to spread the dough out onto the prepared baking sheet and bake for about 20 minutes, or until it has a nice colour.

For image see page 171

FINNISH MILK FLATBREADS

Maitorieska (Finland)

Originally this milk-and-barley based flatbread was most common in the Finnish region of Ostrobothnia, but today can be found pretty much across the whole country. Eat it fresh with some butter on the side and a glass of milk to drink next to it.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 8–10 pieces

500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) milk
7 g/0.24 oz (½ tablespoon) salt
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (3 cups) barley flour
60 g/2¼ oz (½ cup) plain (all-purpose) flour
butter, to serve

Preheat the oven to at least 250°C/480°F/Gas Mark 9, up to 350°C/660°F/highest gas mark if you can.

Mix all of the ingredients together in a bowl. The dough should be quite firm.

Divide the dough into 8–10 equal pieces. Knead the individual pieces by hand for a little while, then shape them into round flatbreads using your hands. They should be about 1 cm/½ inch thick.

Put the flatbreads on a baking sheet and prick them all over with a fork. Bake for 8–10 minutes, depending on how hot the oven is. Serve warm with butter.

For image see page 171

FINNISH POTATO FLATBREADS

Perunarieska (Finland)

This soft and quite thick Finnish potato flatbread is often eaten warm with some salty butter spread on top. Perfect to make if you have leftover mashed potatoes.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 10 flatbreads

5 g/0.20 oz (1 teaspoon) salt
1 egg
180 g/6½ oz (1½ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour
250 g/9 oz (1 cup) leftover mashed potatoes
butter, to serve

Preheat the oven to 250°C/480°F/Gas Mark 9 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Add the salt, egg and flour to the mashed potatoes in a bowl and mix until it is a smooth dough. Divide the dough into 10 equal pieces and flatten them with your hands into quite thin, round breads.

Put the breads on the prepared baking sheet and bake for 8–10 minutes, or until the breads are nicely golden. Enjoy them warm from the oven with butter.

ICELANDIC LEAF BREAD

Laufabrauð (Iceland)

Essential to many family's preparations for Christmas and often served with the Christmas dinner dishes, *Hangilaeri* (Icelandic cold-smoked and boiled leg of lamb) and *Jólarjúpa* (Icelandic Christmas grouse), these flat, deep-fried and richly decorated breads are something made by the whole family together, as a sort of social event just before the holidays. Originating in northern Iceland, the custom of making *laufabrauð* is now widely spread throughout the whole island. These days ready-made *laufabrauð* dough can be bought in Icelandic supermarkets.

The intricate patterns are cut either with a small knife or with a special brass roller called *laufabrauðsjárn* (see illustration opposite). You will also need a deep, wide pot for frying the leaf breads. It should be wide enough that they can lie flat. The traditional fat of choice for the frying would be rendered sheep's tallow, but any kind of suitable fat or oil can be used.

Preparation and cooking time: at least an entire afternoon, depending on how many people are involved in the preparation
Makes: about 40 leaf breads

1 kg/2¼ lb (8½ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour
40 g/1½ oz (2½ tablespoons) sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
5 g/0.20 oz (1 teaspoon) salt
40 g/1½ oz (2¾ tablespoons) butter
500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) milk, lukewarm
neutral cooking oil, for deep-frying

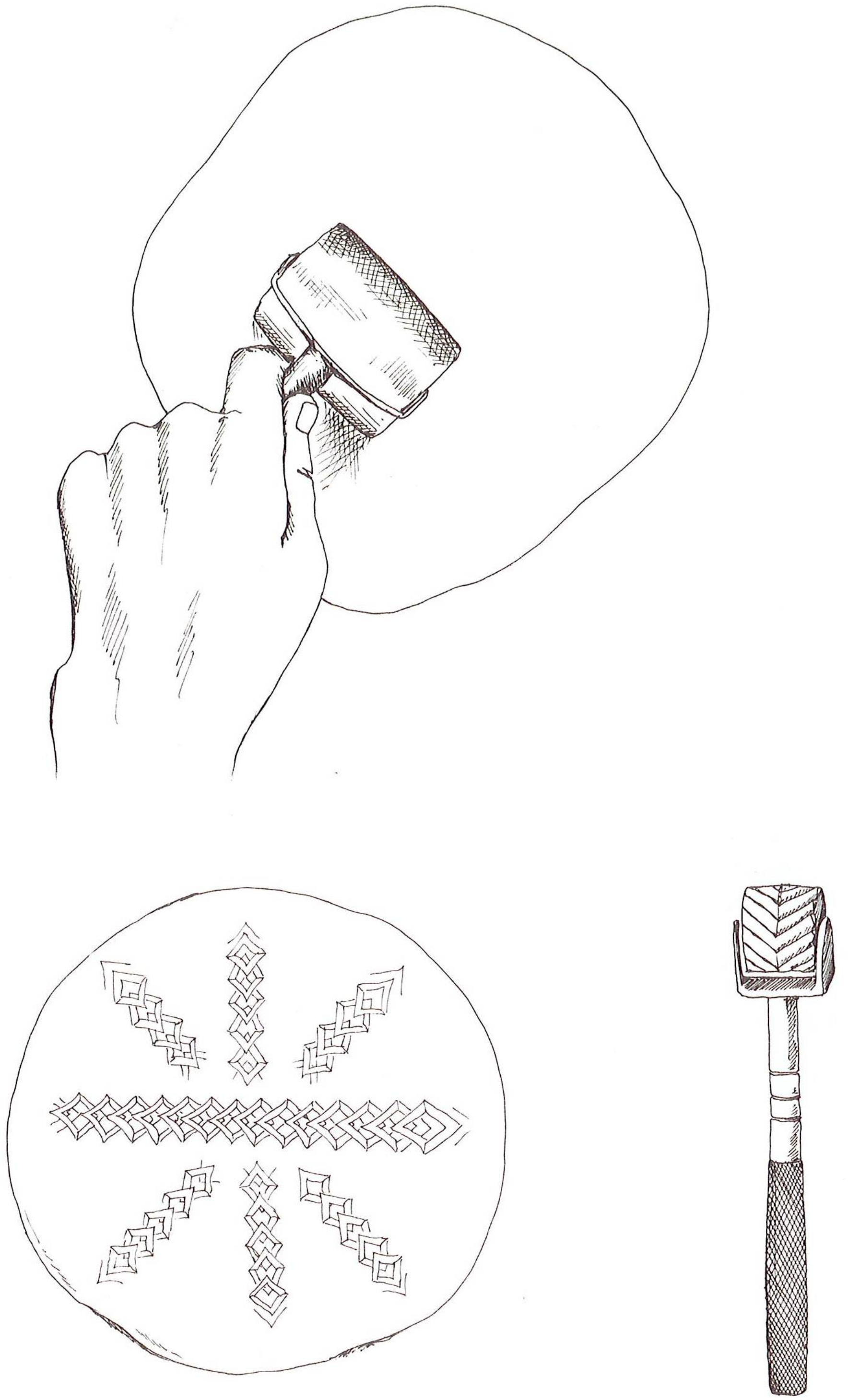
Mix all the dry ingredients together in a large bowl. Melt the butter in the warm milk. Make a little well in the middle of the flour mixture, then pour in the liquid and start stirring it in, as though you were making a traditional Italian pasta dough. Use your hand to stir the liquid so that more and more of the flour gets caught up in motion and incorporated into the dough. Continue working until all the flour is absorbed. The resulting dough should be rather firm and completely smooth.

Divide the dough in half, shape the pieces into logs then wrap them in clingfilm (plastic wrap) or a clean, damp dish towel. Leave to rest for about 30 minutes.

Heat the oil in a deep, wide pot to 190–200°C/375–400°F.

Because the dough dries out so fast, at this stage you need to be working with several other people. Cut a thin slice of dough and roll it out to a very, very thin disc, 15–20 cm/6–8 inches in diameter; it should be almost see-through. As soon as the dough is rolled out, hand it over to the next person for decoration (see illustrations, right), who hands it over to yet another person for frying.

The cooking itself takes only seconds, and the result should be a very pale, golden colour. As soon as they are fried, the breads can be pressed between 2 flat surfaces for a short while to make them completely flat, although this is only necessary for aesthetic reasons. Once you are happy, leave them on wire racks to cool down and crisp up.



Clockwise from top: rolling out the leaf bread dough; a laufabrauðsjárn (special brass roller); decorated leaf bread dough

FINNISH BARLEY FLATBREADS

Ohrarieska (Finland)

It's extremely important when making these unleavened flatbreads to use very cold water and to keep the dough equally cold until it's baked in a very hot oven. Only then will the chewy texture of the bread reach perfection.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 6 small or 2 large flatbreads

220 g/7¾ oz (1½ cups) barley flour, plus extra for dusting
5 g/0.20 oz (1 teaspoon) salt

Preheat the oven to 250°C/480°F/Gas Mark 9 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Place the barley flour and salt in a bowl with 200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) very cold water and work it together quickly until it is just well mixed, and not kneaded.

Tip the dough onto a floured work counter and divide it into 6 small or 2 large pieces. Flatten each piece out with your hand, but do not knead the dough before doing this, as it will make the flatbreads excessively chewy. The rounds should be about 1 cm/½ inch in thickness.

Place the rounds on the prepared baking sheet and bake for 10–15 minutes. They will not colour much nor puff up, but it's important that they bake all the way through so that the flour is actually cooked. *Ohrarieska* are best eaten straight from the oven.

FINNISH LAPLAND BARLEY FLATBREADS

Lapinrieska (Finland)

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Makes: 4 flatbreads

2 kg/4½ lb (13⅓ cups) barley flour
10 g/¼ oz (2 teaspoons) salt
2 teaspoons baking powder

Preheat the oven to 300°C/572°F/Highest gas mark and place a heavy baking sheet in to heat up.

Place all of the ingredients in a large bowl and mix well, then add 2 litres/68 fl oz (8½ cups) very cold water and work together using your hands. Work quickly as you want the dough to be cold when you bake it.

When the dough just holds together scrape it out onto a work counter and divide it into 4 equal pieces. Press each piece out into an even round with a diameter of 30 cm/12 inches, then prick them all over with a fork. Place the rounds on the preheated baking sheet and bake for 7 minutes. If you open the oven door and tap the *rieska* with the handle of a knife they should sound hollow, if they don't you can leave them for a little longer. Leave to cool in a stack.

GRAHAM CRISPBREAD

Grahamsknäcke (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Rising time: 30 minutes
Makes: 12 crispbreads

250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) milk
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
1 tablespoon honey or golden syrup
25 g/1 oz (2 tablespoons) butter, melted
7 g/0.24 oz (1½ teaspoons) salt
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (3½ cups plus 1 tablespoon) graham flour, plus extra for dusting
3 tablespoons rye flakes

Heat the milk in a pan to body temperature (37°C/98.6°F). Put the yeast into the bowl of a stand mixer and pour the milk over to dissolve the yeast. Add the rest of the ingredients and knead the dough with the dough hook, starting at low speed, for 5–10 minutes. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes.

Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and divide it into 12 equal pieces. Roll each piece out with a rolling pin, then roll over each one once with a *kruskavel* (a knobbed rolling pin, see illustration page 158), to prick them.They should be really thin.

Place the breads onto several sheets of baking (parchment) paper. Preheat the oven to 250°C/480°F/Gas Mark 9 and put empty baking sheets in the oven to warm. Place the breads (still on the baking papers) onto the warm baking sheets and bake for 4–5 minutes.

MIXED SEED CRISPBREAD

Fröknäcke (Sweden)

This is one of my favourite recipes in the whole world. I first tasted it about ten years ago when my wife Tove (who also worked on a lot of the recipe development for this book) baked it at our house. It is deliciously textured, nutty, lightly bitter and salty. I found out after doing research that recipes like this, although not at all traditional, were quite popular in books with baking for people who suffer from celiac disease since they contain no wheat. I did some research into the way these recipes function and it even turned into a dish at my restaurant Fäviken: a super-thin linseed and vinegar crisp that's only one linseed thick and very tasty. Anyhow, bake them once and you will keep doing it over and over regardless of whether you are celiac or not.

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Makes: 1 crispbread the size of a baking sheet

70 g/2¾ oz (4½ tablespoons) sesame seeds
70 g/2¾ oz (½ cup) linseeds (flaxseeds)
75 g/2¾ oz (½ cup plus 2 tablespoons) pumpkin seeds
75 g/2¾ oz (½ cup) sunflower seeds
60 g/2¼ oz (½ cup) cornflour (cornstarch)
5 g/0.20 oz (1 teaspoon) salt
50 ml/1¾ fl oz (3½ tablespoons) neutral cooking oil
sea salt flakes, for sprinkling (optional)

Mix all of the dry ingredients together in a bowl, then add the oil and 200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) boiling water. Stir well, then leave to swell for 10 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Spread the batter out onto the lined baking sheet, it should cover pretty much the whole paper. If you like, you can sprinkle some sea salt flakes on top. Bake for 1½ hours, then drag the baking (parchment) paper with the crispbread off the baking sheet and leave it to cool and become crisp on a wire rack. Break the crispbread into 8–10 pieces and serve with toppings or dips.

RYE CRISPBREADS

Knekkbreyð (Faroe Islands)
Hrökkbrauð (Iceland)
Knekkebrød (Norway)
Näkkileipä (Finland)
Knækbrød (Denmark)
Knäckebröd (Sweden)

These leavened flatbreads are baked in an oven unlike the uniquely Norwegian Crisp Flatbreads (page 172), which are not. They are common all over the Nordic region and in many other parts of the world to which they are being exported. Their origins lie in Sweden and Finland where they have been baked more or less in their current form for about 500 years. In Sweden archaeologists have found evidence of flatbreads being made as early as the sixth century, those however were baked on hot stones. Since the early nineteenth century, when wood-fired baking ovens started to become more common on many farms, the dried crispbread with its characteristic hole in the middle became really common. Before the invention of the iron stove, baking was something people out on the farms did perhaps twice a year. Once in autumn (fall) after the harvest and once in spring when the winter stores had run out. The hole in the middle was simply there to facilitate the hanging and handling of the breads on long wooden poles, which would rest between the rafters of the farmhouse itself or those of a dedicated storage house.

Today very few people bake these kinds of breads themselves but rather buy them ready-made. A meal with pickled herring that doesn't include darkly toasted rye sourdough crispbread, good salty butter and mature cheese is for many, including myself, unthinkable.

Apart from when trying this recipe, I can barely remember a time when I made this myself but I thought it would be interesting to include it anyway. Not only because it is very tasty but also because it explains the method behind a very important part of Nordic food culture even though it isn't practised any more.

It is a bit awkward to bake these in an ordinary domestic oven but it works ok. If you have access to a wood-fired bread oven or a pizza oven, that works the best.

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Rising time: 50 minutes
Second baking: overnight (optional)
Makes: about 20 crispbreads

500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) milk
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
330 g/11½ oz (2½ cups) coarse rye flour,
 plus extra for dusting
400 g/14 oz (3 cups) strong wheat flour,
 plus extra to dust
2 teaspoons aniseed, crushed

Pour the milk into the bowl of a stand mixer, add the yeast and stir until dissolved. Add the remaining ingredients and knead with the dough hook at medium speed until the dough doesn't stick much to the edges of the bowl any more. It will take at least 10 minutes but can take longer. Leave the dough to rise for 30 minutes.

Tip the dough out onto a floured work counter and divide into 15–20 equal-sized pieces, shape them with a floured hand into round buns and leave them to rise for another 20 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper and place in the oven to heat up.

Sprinkle a good handful of rye flour onto a work counter and place a bun onto it. Roll the bun out into a round of at least 20 cm/8 inches in diameter and finish by rolling over it with a knobbed rolling pin. Continue with the remaining buns.

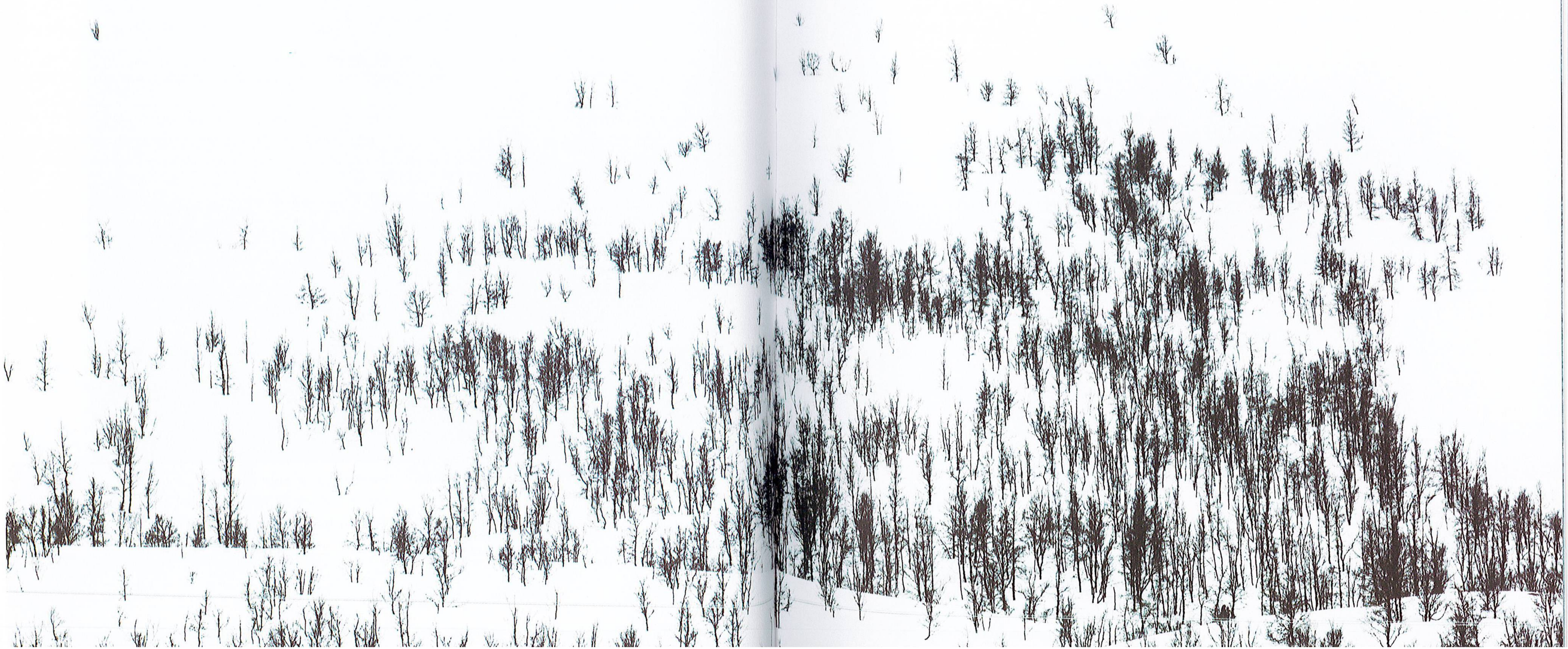
Place each round on the preheated baking sheet and bake for about 5 minutes. They don't have to stay in the oven until they are crisp as they will dry afterwards. Let them cool on wire racks until completely crisp before eating them.

Tip: I like toasted crispbread, which means that you put them in the oven for a second baking and drying after they have been baked the first time. To do this, reduce the oven temperature to 100°C/200°F/Gas Mark ¼, stack the crispbreads and place them in the oven on a wire rack overnight. They will darken a lot and dry completely.

For image see page opposite

Top to bottom: Swedish Hard Flatbreads (page 160); Swedish Hard Blood Flatbreads (page 164); Rye Crispbreads (page 180)

RUSKS AND CRACKERS

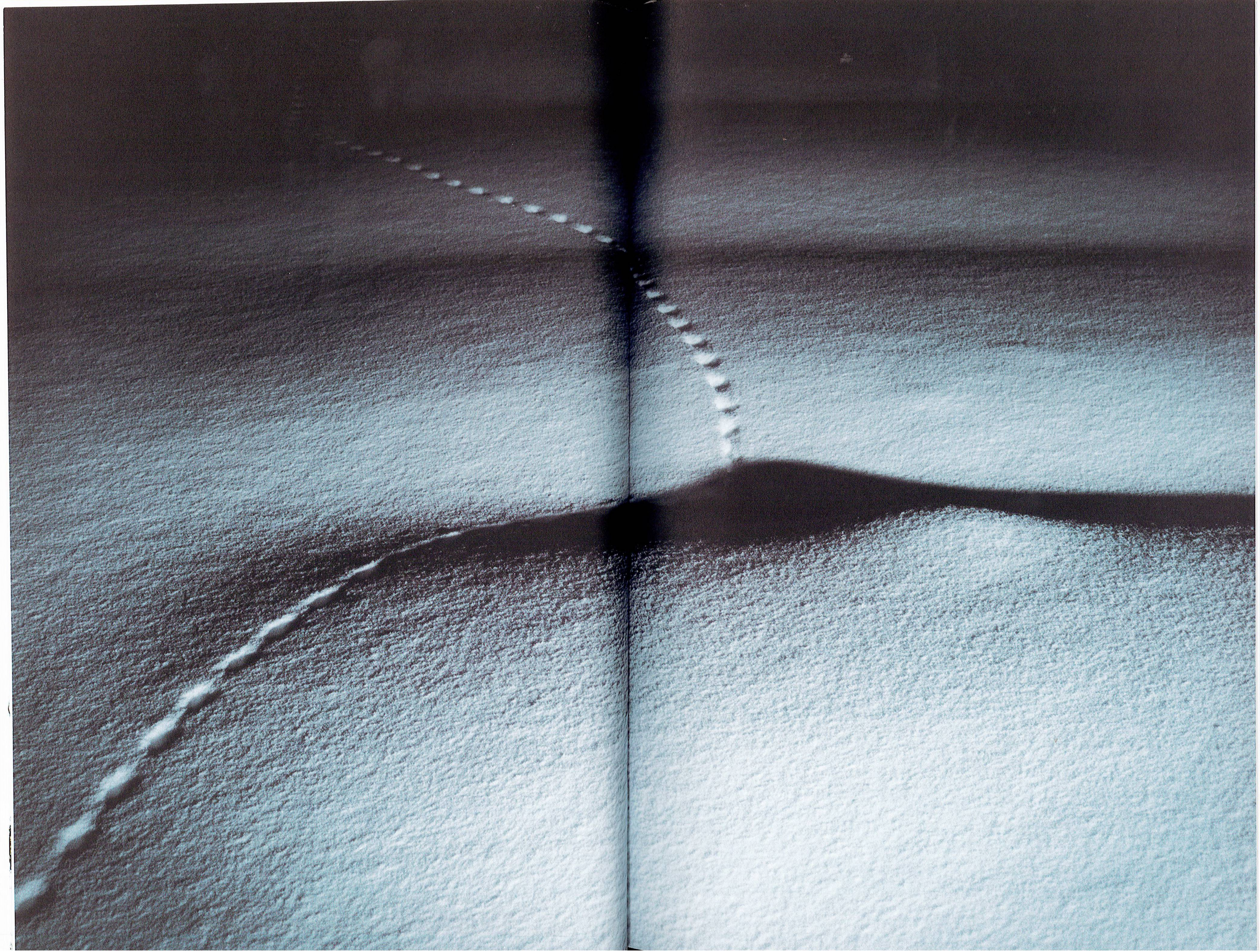


Previous page: Birch trees on a snowy hill, winter 2013.

Rusks and crackers are baked twice. The first time cooks the starch within them, as in any other bread, and then they are baked again at a slightly lower temperature to toast and dry them out completely. In the case of rusks they are also cut before being dried.

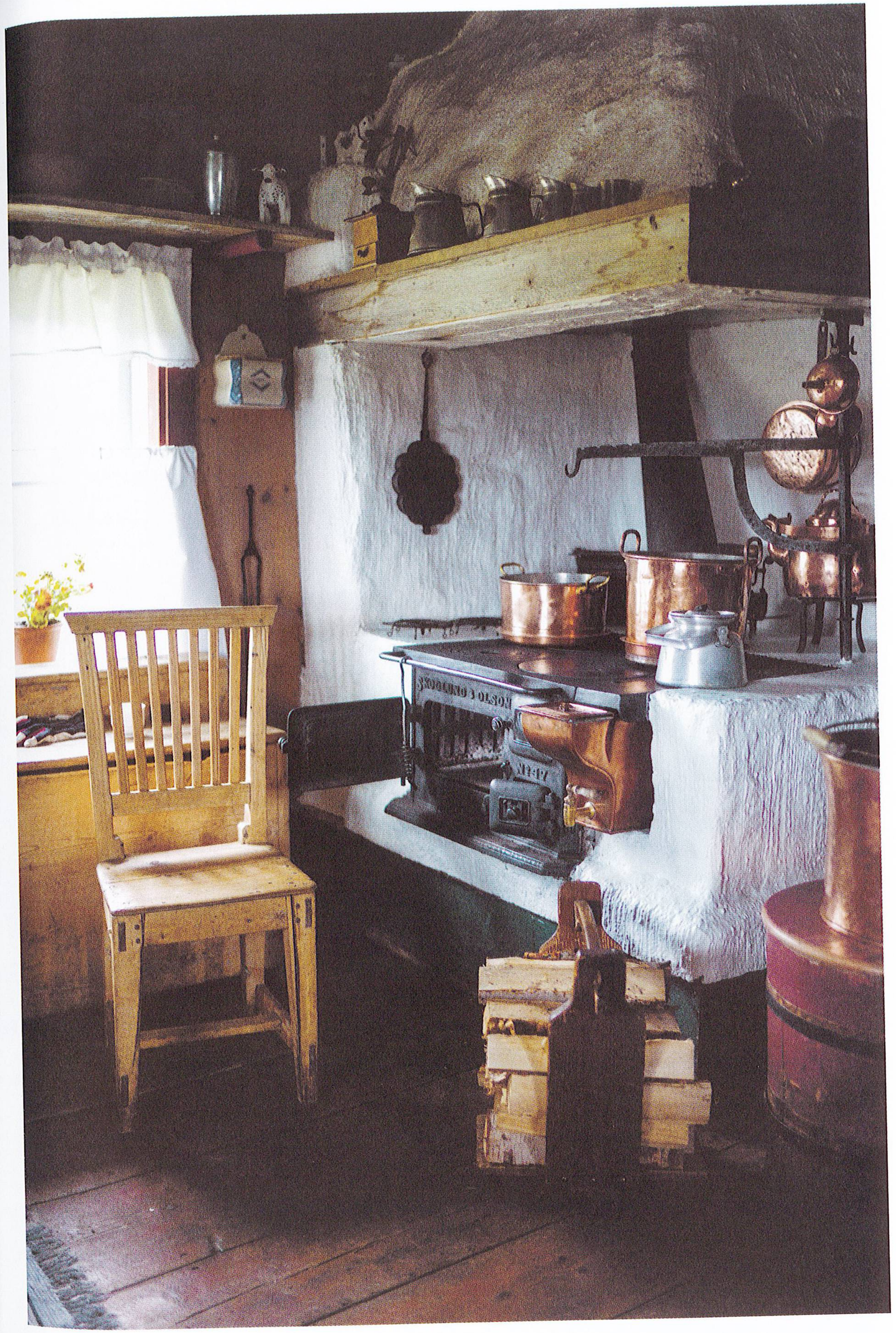
There are records showing that rusks have been baked in the Nordics at least since the sixteenth century. They were initially very popular on ocean-going ships as they store almost indefinitely if kept sealed in dry barrels. Today rusks can be either sweet like cookies, and eaten with coffee as a pastry, or without added sweetness, and spread with butter and cheese and eaten a bit like sandwiches as a snack.

Most sweet rusks are made from wheat flour and most other ones are made from a mix of wheat and rye flour, or from wholemeal (whole-wheat) flour. Cinnamon Buns (page 264) that are getting a little old are commonly cut into pieces and baked a second time before being dried out and eaten as rusks.



Previous page: Mouse tracks in the snow, Sweden, winter 2018.

Opposite: Interior of a traditional north Swedish mountain farm house, summer 2014.


SKOGLUND & OLSON

CRISP ROLLS / RUSKS

Tvíbökur (Iceland)
Kavringer (Norway)
Korput (Finland)
Tvebakker (Denmark)
Skorpor (Sweden)

I love these with some salty butter and a slice of mature cheese. It's the perfect thing to nibble on in the afternoon with a cup of coffee next to it.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Rising time: 1 hour
Drying time: a few hours or overnight
Makes: about 40 rolls

1 quantity any one of the three basic Sweet Wheat Bun Doughs (pages 258–9), flavoured with cardamom
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)

Follow the instructions for making one of the sweet wheat bun doughs on pages 258–9.

Line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the leavened dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and knead for a minute. Divide it in half and roll into 2 logs. Place the logs on the prepared baking sheet, cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 15–20 minutes, or until almost doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Brush the logs with egg wash and bake for about 15 minutes, or until golden.

When still warm but not hot from the oven, cut each log horizontally in half along its whole length. Cut each half log into suitable pieces, perhaps 3 cm/1¼ inches wide. Place the pieces, cut-side-up on a baking sheet and put them in the oven again at 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2. Keep them in there until they take on a light golden colour, about 15 minutes. Turn the oven off and leave the rusks inside with the oven door slightly ajar to dry for a few hours or overnight.

For image see page opposite

GRAHAM RUSKS

Grahamsskorpor (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Rising time: 1½ hours
Drying time: overnight
Makes: 60 rusks

100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) lard or 150 g/5 oz (1¼ sticks) butter
500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) milk
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
50 g/2 oz (½ cup) wheat bran
300 g/11 oz (2¼ cups) graham flour
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon baker's ammonia
420 g/15 oz (3½ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour

Melt the butter or lard in a pan. Add the milk, then heat to body temperature (37°C/98.6°F). Dissolve the yeast in the milk and butter/lard mixture in the bowl of a stand mixer. Add the wheat bran, graham flour, salt and baker's ammonia and knead the dough with the dough hook at low speed while adding most of the plain (all-purpose) flour. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 45 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Line several baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Use the rest of the plain flour to dust the work counter, then tip the dough out onto it and knead for a minute. Divide the dough in half and roll into 2 logs. Cut each log into 30 slices or buns and place on the baking sheets. Leave to rise for 45 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Bake for 10 minutes, or until golden. Leave to cool on wire racks covered with a clean dish towel.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line several baking sheets with baking paper. Use a fork to cut the cooled slices or buns in half horizontally. Place them, cut-side up, on the baking sheets and bake until golden. Turn the oven off and leave the rusks inside with the oven door slightly ajar to dry for a few hours or overnight.

Clockwise from top left: Rye Rusks (page 192); Crisp Rolls / Rusks (page 190); Potato Crackers (page 196); Graham Crackers (page 197); Rye Crackers (page 196); Saffron Rusks (page 194)

RYE RUSKS

Rågskorpor (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Rising time: 1 hour
Drying time: overnight
Makes: about 50 rusks

250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) milk
120 g/4 oz (1 stick) butter, melted
25 g/1 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
1 teaspoon salt
80 g/3 oz (¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
100 g/3½ oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons) rye flour
100 g/3½ oz (⅔ cup plus 1 tablespoon) Swedish rye/wheat bread flour (*rågsikt*), sifted or 70 g/2¾ oz (½ cup) strong wheat flour and 30 g/1 oz (¼ cup) rye flour
200 g/7 oz (1⅔ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour

Heat the milk and melted butter together in a pan to body temperature (37°C/98.6°F). Dissolve the yeast in the milk and butter mixture in the bowl of a stand mixer. Add the salt, sugar, rye flour, rye and wheat flour mix and most of the plain (all-purpose) flour and knead with the dough hook for a few minutes. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes.

Line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper. Dust the work counter with the rest of the plain flour, then tip the dough onto the floured work counter and knead it for a few minutes. This dough is supposed to be quite loose and a bit fatty. Divide the dough in half and roll into logs. Place the logs on the prepared baking sheet and leave them to rise for 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Bake the logs for 15–20 minutes, or until golden. Leave them to cool a little before cutting each log in half, horizontally, along its whole length, then cut each half log into suitable pieces, about 3 cm/1¼ inches wide.

Preheat the oven to 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2 and line several baking sheets with baking paper. Place the pieces, cut-side up, on the prepared baking sheets and put them in the oven again for about 15 minutes. Turn the oven off and leave the rusks inside with the door slightly ajar to dry completely overnight.

For image see page 191

NORWEGIAN RYE AND WHOLEMEAL RUSKS

Skonroker (Norway)

This very hard whole-grain rusk is a true Norwegian classic. It is not that common anymore (which is a pity because they are delicious), but if you look in older books they are everywhere. The name comes from the low German word *schon(e) rogge* meaning light rye.

Preparation and cooking time: 25 minutes
Cooling time: 20 minutes
Rising time: 1 hour
Drying time: check after 4–5 hours
Makes: 20 rusks

50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
240 g/8½ oz (2 cups) fine rye flour
60 g/2¼ oz (½ cup) wholemeal (whole-wheat) flour, plus extra for dusting
150 g/5 oz (1¼ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour
1 tablespoon sugar
2 tablespoons neutral cooking oil
2 teaspoons salt

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Put the yeast and 600 ml/20 fl oz (2½ cups) water in the bowl of a stand mixer and stir until the yeast is fully dissolved. Add all of the remaining ingredients and work with the dough hook for about 5 minutes, or until the dough is shiny and smooth. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Tip the very sticky dough out onto a floured work counter. Using wet hands, pinch off 10 equal pieces of dough and shape them into buns, then place them on the prepared baking sheets. Cover with clean dish towels and leave the buns to rise for another 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Bake the buns for 10 minutes, then leave to cool for 20 minutes or so. Cut each bun in half horizontally, then spread them out, cut-side up, on the baking sheets and place in the oven again at 120°C/248°F/Gas Mark ¼ until dry. This will take several hours.

FINNISH SOUR RYE RUSKS

Hapankorput (Finland)
Surskorpor (Sweden)

Have you ever had a shop-bought thin rye cracker called Finn Crisp? Well, this is the traditional Finnish recipe, which the industrial version was modelled after.

Preparation and cooking time: 3 hours
Rising time: 2½ hours
Resting time: 12– 24 hours
Makes: 75 rusks

165 g/5¾ oz (1¼ cups) coarse rye flour
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
1 tablespoon salt
1½ teaspoons ground caraway seeds
770 g/1 lb 11 oz (5¾ cups) graham flour

Place the rye flour in the bowl of a stand mixer. Bring 300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) water to the boil and pour it over the flour. Stir until mixed, then cover with clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave for 12–24 hours.

The next day, pour 400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) water into a pot, add the butter and heat until the butter has melted. Remove from the stove and leave to cool until it is just lukewarm. Add the yeast and stir until dissolved, then add this yeast liquid together with the remaining ingredients to the rye flour mixture in the bowl of the stand mixer from the day before. Fit the dough hook attachment and work for about 5 minutes. The dough should be quite firm but will still be sticky because of the rye flour. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 2 hours.

Line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Scrape the dough out onto a work counter and divide it in half, then shape each half into a log, about 35 cm/14 inches in length. Place the logs on the prepared baking sheet, cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Bake for 35 minutes. When you take the logs out of the oven, leave them on the baking sheet and cover with a clean dish towel to cool slowly. You can cut them after an hour or so but it's easier to cut rye bread nicely if you leave it to set until the following day. Anyhow, when the time has come, cut the logs into 5-mm/¼-inch slices and spread them on several baking sheets lined with baking paper before baking a second time at 100°C/212°F/Gas Mark ¼ for about 2 hours, or until completely dry.

SAFFRON RUSKS

Saffransskorpor (Sweden)

In my family these sweet saffron rusks are a must-have for Christmas. Serve as they are with *glögg* (pages 538–40) or as part of *fika* (pages 44–9).

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Rising time: 1 hour
Drying time: overnight
Makes: 45 pieces

100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter
1 g/0.04 oz saffron (page 75)
65 g/2½ oz (¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon) sugar
300 g/11 oz (2½ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour, plus extra for dusting
1½ teaspoons baking powder
1 handful almonds
2 eggs

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Place the butter in a pot over a medium heat until melted, then add the saffron and be sure to use a stainless steel spoon rather than a rubber spatula or wooden spoon when you stir as the saffron will make the latter two yellow forever.

Add all of the dry ingredients, the almonds, the melted saffron butter and the eggs to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and work until combined.

Transfer the dough to a lightly floured work counter and divide it into 3 equal pieces. Shape the pieces into elongated loaves about the length of the baking sheet. Place the loaves cut-side up onto the prepared baking sheet and bake for 25 minutes. Leave to cool on the baking sheet for a few minutes before cutting each loaf into 15 rusks while still warm. Place the rusks on the baking sheets, then put in the oven again at 125°C/257°F/Gas Mark ¼ and bake for another 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and leave to cool and dry overnight.

For image see page 191

ALMOND RUSKS

Mandelskorpor (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes, plus time to dry completely
Makes: 30–36 rusks

120 g/4 oz (1 stick) butter, at room temperature
200 g/7 oz (1 cup) sugar
2 eggs
100 g/3½ oz (⅔ cup) almonds (skins on), finely chopped
325 g/11¾ oz (2½ cups) soft (weak) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
1 teaspoon baking powder

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Combine the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat until pale and fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time, making sure each is fully incorporated before you add the next. Add the chopped almonds, then sift the flour and baking powder into the bowl. Mix gently until smooth and sticky but be careful not to overwork the dough.

Transfer the dough to a lightly floured work counter. Divide it into 3 equal pieces, shape them into long logs almost the length of the baking sheet. Lift the logs onto the prepared baking sheet.

Bake until lightly golden. Leave the baked logs to cool on the baking sheet for a few minutes before cutting each log into 10–12 rusks. Leave to dry out completely on a wire rack. If you want them golden, then toast them in a hot oven for a few minutes.

CHOCOLATE RUSKS

Chokladskorpor (Sweden)

Crispy rusks with chocolate are not at all traditional, but they have become increasingly common in Sweden since the mid 1990s onwards.

Preparation and cooking time: 1¼ hours
Drying time: overnight
Makes: 40 rusks

100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter
170 g/6 oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) sugar
3 eggs, at room temperature
260 g/9¼ oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) plain (all-purpose) flour
60 g/2¼ oz (⅔ cup) cocoa powder
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
150 g/5 oz dark (semisweet) chocolate, cut into 5-mm/¼-inch pieces

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Combine the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat until pale and fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time, stirring constantly and making sure each is fully incorporated before you add the next. Add all of the dry ingredients together to the butter and sugar mixture and work until just combined.

Transfer the dough to a lightly floured work counter. Divide the dough in half and shape into 2 elongated loaves, slightly shorter than the length of the baking sheet. Place both loaves on the prepared baking sheet and bake for 20 minutes. Leave to cool on the baking sheet for a few minutes before cutting each loaf into 20 rusks while still warm. Place the cut rusks on the baking sheet, put in the oven again at 125°C/257°F/Gas Mark ¼ and bake for another 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and leave to cool and dry overnight.

SWEET RUSKS TO SERVE WITH SWEET SOUPS

Sukkerkavringer (Norway)
Kammarjunkere (Denmark)
Sockerskorpor (Sweden)

These sweet and crisp rusks are usually flavoured with vanilla, lemon or cardamom and they are served a bit like croutons with sweet fruit soups (pages 521–3). Add cardamom with the dry ingredients, and lemon or vanilla with the egg and cream.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour, plus time to dry completely
Makes: 40 rusks

250 g/9 oz (2 cups plus 1 tablespoon) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
1 tablespoon baking powder
75 g/2¾ oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) sugar
good pinch of salt
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
1 egg
50 ml/2 fl oz (3½ tablespoons) cream

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Sift all the dry ingredients together into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the padde attachment. Add the butter and beat until fully incorporated; the mix will look sort of gravelly and a bit dry. Add the egg and the cream to the mixture and work it again until fully incorporated.

Tip the dough out onto a floured work counter and divide in half. Roll into 2 log, about 3 cm/1¼ inches in diameter. Cut each log into 10 slices and use your hands to shape them into balls. Place the balls onto the prepared baking sheet and bake until golden.

Remove the baked rusks from the oven and split each one in half, a bit like a hamburger bun is split using a fork and pulling, rather than a knife. Place them back onto the baking sheet, cut-side up. Lower the oven temperature to 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2. Bake the rusks for about 15 minutes, until lightly golden on the cut surface. Turn off the oven and leave the rusks inside until the oven is cold and the rusks are crisp.

RYE CRACKERS

Rågkex (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: about 45 crackers

- 125 g/4½ oz (1 stick) butter, cold and cut into small pieces
- 125 g/4½ oz (1 cup) rye flour
- 125 g/4½ oz (1 cup) plain (all-purpose) flour, plus extra for dusting
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baker's ammonia
- 1 tablespoon cumin seeds (optional)

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Put the cold butter and the rest of the ingredients into a food processor. Process to a crumbly consistency. Add 100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) water and process until just combined.

Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and roll it out to about 3 mm/⅛ inch in thickness. Prick the dough with a fork and cut it into your desired shapes and sizes. If you cut 7 x 5-cm/2¾ x 5-inch rectangles you will end up with about 45 crackers.

Place the crackers on the prepared baking sheets and bake for 10–12 minutes. Leave them to cool on wire racks.

For image see page 191

OAT CRACKERS

Havrekex (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Resting time: overnight
Makes: about 50 crackers

- 375 g/13¼ oz (3¾ cups) rolled oats
- 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) milk
- 100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
- 90 g/3¼ oz (6 tablespoons) sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 15 g/½ oz baker's ammonia
- 120 g/4 oz (1 cup) plain (all-purpose) flour, plus extra for dusting

Mix the oats with the milk in the bowl of a stand mixer, then leave in the refrigerator overnight.

The next day, preheat the oven to 250°C/480°F/Gas Mark 9 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Add the soft butter to the oat and milk mixture and use the stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment to mix until well combined. Add the rest of the ingredients and mix for a few minutes.

Tip the dough out onto a floured work counter and roll it out to about 3 mm/⅛ inch in thickness. Make crackers of your preferred shape, either using a cookie cutter or a knife.

Place the crackers on the prepared baking sheets and bake for 5–7 minutes. Leave them to cool on wire racks.

POTATO CRACKERS

Potatiskex (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Resting time: 15 minutes
Makes: about 35 crackers

- 100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
- 150 g/5 oz floury potatoes, peeled, boiled and still warm
- 150 g/5 oz (1¼ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour, plus extra for dusting
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Egg Wash (pages 73–4)
- poppy seeds, for topping (optional)

Stir the butter in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment until it is soft. Add the warm potatoes and mix them with the butter. Add the rest of the ingredients and knead until you have a dough. Cover with clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave the dough in the refrigerator for 15 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and roll out to about 3mm/⅛ inch in thickness and cut it into squares.

Place the crackers on the prepared baking sheets. Brush with the egg wash and sprinkle some poppy seeds on top, if you like. Bake for 15 minutes, or until golden. Leave them to cool on wire racks.

For image see page 191

GRAHAM CRACKERS

Grahamskex (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: about 40 crackers

- 400 g/14 oz (3 cups plus 1 tablespoon) graham flour, plus extra for dusting
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- pinch of sea salt
- 120 g/4 oz (1 stick) butter, cold and cut into 1-cm cubes
- 150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) cream

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Combine all of the dry ingredients and the butter in a food processor and process to the consistency of coarse sand. Add the cream and process until just combined.

Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and roll it out to about 3 mm/⅛ inch in thickness. These crackers don't rise very much. Prick the dough all over its surface with a fork and cut into your desired shapes, either using a cookie cutter or a knife. Circles look nice, but are a bit wasteful as I find re-rolling the dough scraps doesn't produce a great result. I prefer to cut rough squares instead.

Place the crackers on the prepared baking sheets and bake for 5–8 minutes, depending on the thickness of the crackers, until they are lightly golden. Leave them to cool on wire racks.

For image see page 191

SANDWICHES AND FILLED PASTIES

Previous page: View from the farm of ideas, Sjælland, Denmark 2018.

Opposite: Lunch, Faroe Islands, April 2013.

Oiva

OPEN-FACED DANISH SANDWICHES

Smørrebrød (Denmark)

All over the Nordic region sandwiches are considered important. They consist of a bread of some sort with something tasty on top or in-between layers. In the north and in harsher climates flatbreads, often made with at least some quantity of barley in them, are common. Further south, and in slightly milder climates, rye-based loaves often act as the bread base of choice. In Denmark, with its rich agriculture and its cultural connections to Europe, the open-faced sandwich has evolved not only into a lavish art form but also a completely indispensible part of Danish eating habits. The Danish open-faced sandwich called *smørrebrød* is mostly considered a lunch dish and is often enjoyed in restaurants serving pretty much only that. It is commonly served with a beer on the side and a glass of Aquavit. Every time I go to Copenhagen I will have lunch at Schønnemann, a modern-day Danish institution where these often-mistreated sandwiches are executed to absolute perfection.

Below is a selection of very well-known *smørrebrød* with illustrations and a short step-by-step on how to put them together. A general tip is that for most Danish open-faced sandwiches there should be enough toppings to completely obscure the bread, also they are often really large. I always go to Schønnemann with the ambition of eating five of them, but end up only getting through three.

I am not going to provide quantities and a normal recipe for these sandwiches – it seems so overly on the nose. I will, however, try my best to explain how to put them together and why. They all start with a slice of Danish rye bread.

Dyrlægens natmad means 'the veterinarian's midnight snack'. Spread a slice of rye bread with butter or lard and top with a thick slice of coarsely ground liver pâté. Continue with slices of cold *saltkød* (brined and boiled eye of round) – enough to cover the pâté. Cut some jellied beef stock into strips about 2 cm/¾ inch wide and place over the meat. Top with some raw red onion rings and some cress. The onion is a more recent addition to this recipe, which originates from Oskar Davidsen's *smørerbrød* restaurant during the 1920s, however it is the way most people will have it today.

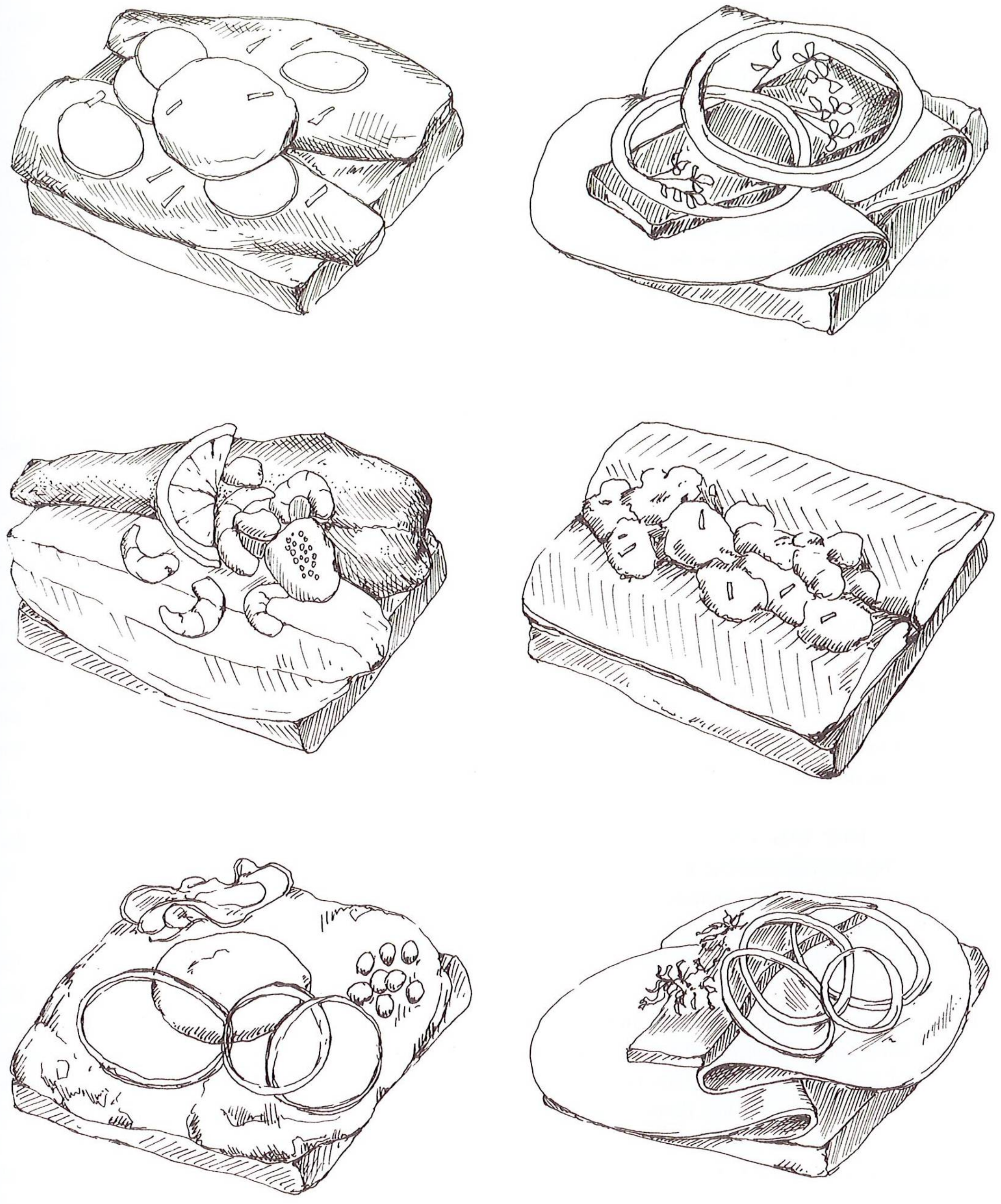
Røget ål med røræg means smoked eel and scrambled eggs. Butter a slice of rye bread and place two large pieces of smoked eel fillet (at room temperature) on top. The fish fillets should cover the bread entirely and almost create a square when placed next to each other. Cover the seam between the two pieces of eel with some great, lukewarm scrambled egg and sprinkle the whole dish with finely cut chives.

Rullepølse means rolled headcheese. Spread the rye bread with lard and cover the surface with slices of *rullepølse*. Place a strip of jellied beef stock, 2 cm/¾ inch in width, across the top of the sandwich and top with raw red onion rings and cress.

Tatar is made with beef tartar. Spread a slice of rye bread with butter or lard, cover the whole top with a flat layer of finely cut or ground beef so that it covers even the edges of the bread. Season well with salt and black pepper and top with a raw egg yolk, raw red onion rings and grated horseradish.

Stjerneskud means 'shooting star'. This *smørrebrød* is one of the few that is not made with rye bread but rather with buttered toast. Place a fillet of steamed white fish like plaice or something similar, so that it covers one half of a slice of toast. Place another piece of fish, which has been breaded and fried, parallel to the first one so that they together cover the whole piece of toast. Place some mayonnaise along the seam between the two pieces of fish and top with shrimp (baby shrimp), *ättiksgurka* (quick pickled cucumber) and lumpfish roe. Serve with a lemon wedge on the side.

Sol over Gudhjem means 'sun over Gudhjem'. Gudjem is a village on the Baltic island of Borholm. Spread a slice of rye bread with butter or lard and place two fillets of smoked herring on top so that they pretty much cover the whole piece of bread. Place a raw egg yolk on top of the herring and top with finely cut chives and pieces of radish.



Clockwise from top left: Sol over Gudhjem; Rullepølse; Røget ål med røræg; Dyrlægens natmad; Tatar; Stjerneskud

SANDWICH TORTE / SAVOURY LAYER CAKE

Brauðterta (Iceland)
Voileipäkakku (Finland)
Smörgåstårta (Sweden)

A man named Gunnar Sjödahl is claimed to have invented the sandwich torte while working at Wedemarks coffeehouse in the Swedish city of Östersund, incidentally also the city where I grew up. Even though it was only popularized as late as the mid-1960s, this oddity of a dish has become a modern classic. Often served at occasions like weddings, funerals, birthdays and other festivities when a lot of people are to be fed in a practical way, it is usually consumed with beer and aquavit on the side.

The sandwich torte is made up of layers of white bread (instead of cake) and savoury fillings such as seasoned mayonnaises and the like (instead of pastry cream). The stack of bread and fillings is then covered with a mix of mayonnaise and crème fraîche or mayonnaise and whipped cream – much like a cream torte is covered in whipped cream.

This savoury layer cake can be topped with almost anything and wild combinations like salmon, meatballs, grapes, shrimp, cucumbers, pineapple, cheese, preserved mandarin wedges and ham are more common than they are uncommon.

However surreal it might sound, if you make it from proper bread, put some effort into the seasoning, and use tasty combinations of toppings, all of which are great in quality, then it is basically just a tasty, giant sandwich – which is easily cut into pieces and conveniently feeds a huge number of people. Highly recommended.

The recipe below is for a seafood torte, but feel free (and get excited) to add or subtract anything, seafood or not.

Preparation time: 30 minutes
Serves: 20 for lunch

2 loaves good white bread
400 g/14 oz (1⅔ cups) cream cheese
35 g/1½ oz (¾ cup) finely cut chives
1 quantity Mayonnaise (page 537)
500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) cream
salt and white pepper, to taste

For the topping
500 g/1 lb 2 oz cold-smoked salmon
  or gravlax, thinly sliced
500 g/1 lb 2 oz cooked shrimp
  (baby shrimp), peeled
grated horseradish, to taste

To garnish
dill fronds
2 lemons, cut into 20 wedges

Cut the bread into 1.5-cm/½-inch slices and trim off the crusts.

Combine the cream cheese, chives and half the mayonnaise in a mixing bowl and season well with salt and pepper.

You will be making 4 layers, so divide the slices into 4 even sets. Lay out the first set of bread slices on a serving platter in a rectangle and spread with one-third of the cream cheese mixture. Continue layering with more slices of bread and filling until you have all 4 layers with 3 layers of filling. Make sure you get nice straight edges on the assembled stack of bread – it should look neat, not just like a pile of bread.

Whip the cream to stiff peaks and mix it with the remaining mayonnaise. Season well with salt and pepper. Spread the mayo cream all over the torte, covering the top and all the sides neatly. You could even pipe on some decorations with a piping (pastry) bag if you want to.

Arrange the salmon, shrimp and horseradish daintily on top of the cake and, if you want, around its edges. Finish with the dill fronds, more horseradish and the lemon wedges. Arrange them in a way that seems pleasing to you.

FOLDED FLATBREAD SANDWICH

Klämma, Stut (Sweden)

A *klämma* or *stut* is any sandwich that is made from Swedish soft flatbreads folded around some kind of topping. It could be charcuterie, a Sweet Reduced Whey Spread (page 536), or even sour herring, potatoes, onion and sour cream.

OPEN-FACED LINGONBERRY AND POTATO PASTIES

Rönttönen (Finland)

These pasties, just barely sweeter than the Karelian Pasties (page 208) which are considered savoury food, are often enjoyed with coffee as a snack.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Resting time: 4 hours
Makes: about 20 pasties

1 quantity rye dough from Karelian Pasties
  (page 208)
melted butter, for brushing

For the filling
300 g/11 oz floury potatoes
50 g/2 oz (½ cup plus 1½ tablespoons)
  fine rye flour, plus extra for dusting
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) lingonberries
3 teaspoons sugar
pinch of salt

Boil the potatoes in a pot of salted water until tender. Drain them, then return them to the pot and mash well. Stir in the remaining filling ingredients and flatten the now pink mash.

Cover the pot and set it aside in a warm place for 4 hours. During this time the residual heat causes a kind of malting process to occur, where some of the starch is converted into sugar and makes the mash taste sweeter. In Finnish this process is called *imellyttäminen*.

When ready to make the pasties, preheat the oven to 250°C/480°F/Gas Mark 9 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Dust a work counter generously with fine rye flour. Break off a small piece of the rye dough and shape it into a ball. Roll the ball out to a very thin circle of 12–14 cm/4½–5½ inches in diameter. Continue with the remaining dough. Place the completed circles in a stack and cover them with a clean, damp dish towel as you work, to prevent them from drying out.

Place a couple of tablespoons of filling onto each dough circle, then fold the edges in towards the middle and crimp them tightly so the whole pasty forms a round. Push the crimps down a little into the filling so that they don't stand up into the air too much; this prevents them burning in the oven.

Arrange the pasties on the prepared baking sheet and bake them for 5–10 minutes; they should be lightly golden. Take them out of the oven and brush them generously with the melted butter straight away.

KARELIAN PASTIES

Karjalanpiirakat (Finland)

This iconic savoury pasty comes from Karelia, a region in eastern Finland that is shared between Russia and Finland. A very thin rye crust envelops a filling made from rice porridge, barley porridge or buttery mashed potatoes. If potatoes are used the pasty is simply called Potato Pasty – or *perunapiirakka*.

Karjalanpiirakat are often served with Finnish Egg Butter (page 537).

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Makes: about 25 pasties

For the rice porridge filling
250 g/9 oz (1¼ cups) short-grain rice
1 teaspoon salt
1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) milk
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter

For the barley porridge filling
1 quantity Crushed Barley Porridge (page 243)

For the mashed potato filling
700 g/1 lb 8½ oz floury potatoes, skins on, but cleaned and rinsed
350 ml/12 fl oz (1½ cups) milk
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter
freshly grated nutmeg, to taste (optional)
salt and white pepper, to taste

For the rye dough
280 g/10 oz (2¼ cups) fine rye flour, plus extra for dusting
1 teaspoon salt
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) melted butter, for brushing

To prepare the rice porridge filling, put the rice and salt into a large pan and add 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) water. Bring to the boil over a medium heat, stirring constantly. Lower the heat and stir in the milk. Continue simmering for another 35 minutes, stirring every now and then. You don't want to break up the grains of rice too much. If the porridge becomes too thick before the rice has softened, adjust the consistency with a bit more milk. Add the butter in the last 5 minutes of the simmering time. When the porridge is done, stir the butter into it until fully incorporated.

To prepare the barley porridge filling, follow the recipe for crushed barley porridge on page 243.

To prepare the mashed potato filling, put the potatoes into a large pan. Cover them with water and bring to the boil over a high heat. Reduce the heat and simmer gently for about 20 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender.

While the potatoes are cooking, combine the milk and butter in a separate pan and heat until the butter has melted.

Drain the potatoes thoroughly and peel them (yes they do have to be hot when you do it). Mash them (or push them through a mouli or potato ricer), then beat in the hot milk mixture with a wooden spoon or a stiff whisk. Season to taste.

Regardless of whether you are making potato filling, rice, or barley filling, it should be cooled to room temperature before you make the pasties.

To make the rye dough, combine the rye flour and salt in a bowl and pour in 200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) cold water. Work the ingredients together until you have a stiff, but smooth, dough. Shape into 2 logs and cover them with a clean, damp dish towel to prevent them from drying out as you work.

Cut a little piece of dough from the log and shape it into a ball. Dust a work counter generously with fine rye flour and roll the dough ball out to a very thin circle of 12–14 cm/4½–5½ inches in diameter. Continue with the remaining dough. Place the completed circles in a stack and cover them with a clean, damp dish towel as you work, to prevent them drying out.

Preheat the oven to 250°C/480°F/Gas Mark 9 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Place a couple of tablespoons of filling onto each dough circle, then fold the edges in towards the middle and crimp them tightly so the whole pasty forms an oval. Push the crimps down a little into the filling so that they don't stand up into the air too much; this will prevent them from burning in the oven. Arrange the pasties on the prepared sheet and bake for 5–10 minutes; they should be lightly golden. Take them out of the oven and brush them generously with the melted butter straight away.

MEAT PASTIES

Lihapiirakka (Finland)

The Finnish pasty culture is more complex than what first meets the eye and it can at times be very confusing. One thing, which is the same everywhere, can be called different names in different parts of the country, whilst other things, which are not the same at all, can share the same name depending on where they are being made and eaten. The name *lihapiirakka* for example, is deceptively simple, meaning 'meat pasty', but actually it contains a universe of variation enveloped in different dough-based casings. If you go to a Helsinki street-food stall and ask for it, you will be served a small deep-fried pasty made from a wheat-based dough and filled with meat, rice and onion. This fast-food pasty, sometimes abbreviated to *lihis*, is also commonly sliced open and filled with less traditional trimmings like ham, fried eggs, cheese, mustard, ketchup, chopped cucumbers and garlic and is then called *atomipiirakka* (yes, it means 'atomic pasty'). This is mostly considered a drunken nighttime treat. However, if you go to a bakery or a café in the same city and you ask for the same thing, a *lihapiirakka*, you will most likely be served something completely different. The filling based on meat, rice and onion might be the same but the exterior will not be. Rather than the individual deep-fried pastry of the street stall, the bakery version consists of two large sheets of puff pastry with the filling inbetween them. The resulting pie, which is not even always called *lihapiirakka*, but sometimes also *lihalevy*, meaning 'meat disc', is cut into suitable pieces before being served on a plate. A smaller sized version of the *lihalevy* with puff pastry would often be known as a *lihapasteija*.

To further complicate this already complex structure of Finnish pasties, a savoury version of the east Finnish *lörtsy* can also be referred to as a *lihapiirakka* in that part of Finland. However, if you ask for a *lörtsy* with meat filling in the same street-food stall in Helsinki where you were just served a *lihapiirakka*, they are going to shake their heads at you. Even though the *lörtsy*, which is today most commonly made with apples, was up until the 1980s very much a meat-only pasty and is still indeed deep fried just like *lihis* are today.

The recipe that follows is for the puff pastry version of *lihapiirakka*. I think the deep-fried one is best enjoyed on site at a Helsinki street corner with milk drunk straight from the carton.

A *lihapiirakka* can, however, also be a more elongated oven-baked pastry similar to the Russian *coulibiac*. I have supplied a recipe for that version on page 210.

Sometimes the oven-baked versions of these meat pasties contain chopped hard-boiled eggs. I have marked this as optional in the relevant recipes, but I quite like it myself.

FINNISH MEAT PASTY MADE WITH PUFF PASTRY

Lihapasteija / Lihapiirakka (Finland)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Serves: 4, with a couple of pieces to spare for lunch another day

1 kg/2¼ lb Puff Pastry (pages 542–3)
butter, to fry and grease
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)

For the filling
600 g/1 lb 5 oz minced (ground) beef
2 onions, finely chopped
½ quantity rice porridge filling from Karelian Pasties (page 208), cooled to room temperature
4 hard-boiled eggs, finely chopped (optional)
salt and pepper, to taste

Roll the puff pastry out into a sheet of about 40 x 60 cm/16 x 24 inches and 5–8 mm/¼–½ inch thick. Cut it into 2 smaller rectangles of 30 x 40 cm/12 x 16 inches each.

Lightly butter a 30 x 40-cm/11½–15¾-inch sheet pan and place one of the puff pastry sheets on it.

Melt some butter in a frying pan and lightly brown the minced (ground) beef and fry the onion until soft and translucent. Transfer the warm beef and onion to a bowl and add the cooled porridge and the chopped egg if you are using it. Mix and season well before spreading the filling out onto the puff pastry in the sheet pan. Place the other sheet of pastry onto the meat mixture.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Brush the top sheet of pastry lightly with the egg wash and bake for 30 minutes, or until golden and cooked through. Let the *lihapiirakka* cool down a little before cutting into it.

ELONGATED LOAF-LIKE FINNISH MEAT PASTY

Lihalevy (Finland)

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Rising time: 1 hour
Serves: 4, with a couple of pieces to spare for lunch another day

1 quantity meat filling from Finnish Meat Pasty made with Puff Pastry (see left)
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)

For the dough
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) milk
750 g/1 lb 10 oz (6¼ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour
150 g/5 oz (1¼ sticks) butter, cold and cut into cubes
2 teaspoons salt

To make the dough, add the yeast and milk to the bowl of a stand mixer and stir until the yeast has completely dissolved. Add the remaining ingredients and knead with the dough hook on full speed until it has combined and is smooth. Cover and leave to rise at room temperature for about 1 hour, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Tip the dough out onto a work counter and divide it in half. Roll out into to 2 rectangles, about 15 x 40 cm/6 x 15¾ inches each. Place one of the rectangles on the prepared baking sheet and spread the filling in a neat line in the middle of it, leaving a 3 cm/1¼ inch border around the whole pastry.

Brush the 3 cm/1¼ inch edge of dough with a little egg wash and place the other layer of dough on top of everything. Crimp the edges to seal the filling inside. Sometimes the edges are folded underneath the pasty; other times the crimp is left so that it can be seen. I prefer to let it be seen. Brush the top of the pastry lightly with egg wash and bake in the oven for 20–30 minutes, or until golden.

DEEP-FRIED SAVOURY PASTIES FROM SAVONLINNA (NYSLOTT)

Lörtsy (Finland)

This is essentially a standard Finnish meat pasty (*Lihapiirakka*, opposite) in which the dough has been rolled out slightly thinner than normal and which, to differ it from the standard one, is deep-fried instead of baked in the oven.

Lörtsy was invented in the 1950s and is a relatively recent addition to the Finnish repertoire of pasties. Confusingly, a sweet version filled with Apple Compote (page 311) also exists under the same name. Read more about the complications of Finnish pasties on page 209.

Preparation and cooking time: 50 minutes
Resting time: 1 hour
Makes: 20 pasties

Egg Wash (pages 73–4)
2 litres/68 fl oz (8½ cups) fat or oil, for deep-frying

For the dough:
25 g/1 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 1 tablespoon) milk, at body temperature (37°C/98.6°F)
2 teaspoons salt
2 tablespoons sugar
2 eggs
900 g/2 lb (7½ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour
75 g/2¾ oz (5 tablespoons) butter, melted

For the filling:
butter, to fry
600 g/1 lb 5 oz minced (ground) beef
2 onions, finely chopped
½ quantity rice porridge filling from Karelian Pasties (page 208), cooled to room temperature
4 hard-boiled eggs, finely chopped (optional)
salt and pepper, to taste

Add the yeast and milk to the bowl of a stand mixer and stir until the yeast has completely dissolved. Add the remaining ingredients and work the dough with the dough hook for about 10 minutes, or until it is elastic and comes cleanly away from the edges of the bowl. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for about 40 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Meanwhile, prepare the filling. Melt some butter in a frying pan, add the minced (ground) beef and lightly brown, then add the onions and fry until soft and translucent. Transfer the warm beef and onions to a bowl and add the cooled porridge and the chopped egg, if using. Mix and season well, then set aside.

Line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Tip the dough out onto a work counter and cut it into 20 equal pieces. Shape each one into a ball before rolling them out into a round, about 5 mm/¼ inch thick. Brush each round with a thin coating of egg wash, place a spoonful of the filling onto each round and fold them together into half-moon shaped parcels. Crimp the edges carefully together to seal. The egg acts like glue.

Place the parcels on the prepared baking sheet, cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 20 minutes.

Heat the oil in a deep, medium pot to 190°C/375°F. Deep-fry a few parcels at a time until deeply golden, then leave them to rest for a while on a wire rack before eating.

FINNISH SALMON PASTY

Lohipiirakka (Finland)
Laxpirog (Sweden)

Serve *lohipiirakka* in slices as one part of lunch or dinner. Sometimes, boiled and chopped eggs are also added to the filling. If you want to do this, five eggs should be fine for the quantity below. The lemon pepper mentioned in this recipe is simply a pre-ground black pepper seasoning mix with added lemon aroma. It is very popular in both Finland and Sweden with fish dishes. In more traditional recipes white pepper would probably have been used. *Lohipiirakka* can be made both using boiled salmon or cured salmon. If you are using the cured option be a bit careful adding more salt as the fish itself will already be quite salty.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 1 large pasty, serves 8

160 g/5½ oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons) long-grain rice
400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) fish stock or cooking juice from the salmon if you are using boiled salmon
200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) cream
2 teaspoons lemon pepper
1 kg/2¼ lb Puff Pastry (pages 542–3)
1 leek, coarsely chopped
300 g/11 oz cured salmon (gravlax) in tiny slices or 400 g/14 oz boiled salmon (cooked with dill), cold
1 handful of chopped dill
Egg Wash (page 73–4)
salt, to taste

Place the rice and fish stock in a pot and bring to the boil. Stir, then reduce the heat to a slow simmer before covering the pot with a lid. Leave until the rice has absorbed all the liquid, it will take about 20 minutes.

When the rice is cooked, add the cream to the still warm rice and season with the lemon pepper and salt. Leave the rice to cool completely.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Roll the puff pastry out into a sheet of about 40 x 60 cm/16 x 24 inches before you cut it into 2 rectangles of 30 x 40 cm/12 x 16 inches each.

Place one puff pastry rectangle onto the prepared baking sheet. Spread the cold rice mixture evenly onto it, leaving a border of about 2 cm/¾ inch uncovered by rice. Continue by spreading first the leek and then the salmon over the rice and finishing with the dill and chopped eggs if using (see intro above). Fold the edges of the puff pastry upwards, a bit like for a pie crust and press towards the edge of the filling. Place the other puff pastry rectangle on top and stretch the edges of it down so that you can tease them in under the bottom of the other pastry rectangle with a few millimetres to keep it securely in place during baking. Brush with the egg wash and bake for 40 minutes. Leave to cool a little before you cut into it.

NORDIC PIZZA

PIZZA IN THE NORDIC REGION

What makes a dish part of national or regional food culture? The simple answer to that is, of course, when people start consuming it somewhere in a region. That would, however, more or less mean that we have no specific regional food culture left in the world as pretty much everything can now be had almost everywhere. You can eat a decent piece of sushi in London, great Indian food in New York and a pretty good open-faced Danish *smørrebrød* (page 204) sandwich in Tokyo.

I think that a dish really becomes part of a food culture when it has been established long enough to have become a part of people's everyday lives, when it isn't a curiosity anymore, and when it has started to adapt to its environment, sometimes changing from the original, becoming a new and unique occurrence.

We eat a lot of pizza in parts of the Nordics, especially in Norway, Sweden and Finland, and pizza is by most people considered a quintessentially Italian food.

If we look at its origins, there is no evidence that the first flattened bread dough with cheese on it was baked in an oven somewhere around Naples. There is plenty of proof that this had been done there for a long time, yes, but we are talking about the very first one. As a matter of fact, it's even more probable that the momentous event didn't happen around Naples. It would stand to reason that any country having a tradition of making flatbreads in wood-fired ovens at the same time as having a tradition of cheese-making could be the coincidental and unacknowledged birthplace of the mother of all pizzas. The northern parts of the Nordic mainland regions have an extensive history of both those food items and it seem logical to me that at some point, somewhere, someone sprinkled some cheese on one of those breads before it went into the oven.

Why didn't it stick then? Why didn't pizza develop into what it is today here instead of in Italy? Why isn't pizza known as a quintessentially Nordic food? I don't know and I think that it is safe to say that, regardless of how it is viewed today, the true historical origins of flatbread with cheese on it is purely speculative.

An historical fact, though, is that the first Italian-style pizza served in Sweden was done so in the city of Västerås at the Asea staff canteen in 1947. On the menu of a restaurant open to the public, it first featured in 1968 at a place in Stockholm called Östergök. The first real pizzeria, Pizzeria Piazza Opera was launched the following year. In Finland the first pizzeria opened in 1961 and was called Restaurant Giovanni.

Regardless of the origin of thinly rolled-out bread dough with cheese on it, these events mark the start of the conquering of the Nordics by Italian-style thin-crust pizza in some form or another.

After the late 1960s, the spread of the pizza gospel proved an unstoppable movement and the interesting thing is that it has evolved since. The original has been tweaked, not only to suit the produce in the Nordic region, but also to fit the preferences of those baking and eating it.

Today you can find a pizzeria in almost every Swedish village. Most of them are not run by Italians or ethnic Swedes, but rather by immigrants predominantly from Turkey, the Balkans or from the Middle East. This has obviously also influenced the evolution of the Nordic pizza; nowhere else is one of the standard fixtures of the pizzeria menu a kebab pizza, at least as far as I know.

The availability of it and the fact that the pizza has been adapted to suit the local palate has led to it becoming one of the most popular foods altogether, further pushing the development of it into becoming a regional speciality at the same time as it has removed itself further from its Italian roots.

In the Nordic region a pizza is almost always served with a plate of cabbage salad on the side. Different sauces to dip your slice in is very common, anything from hot sauce to garlic yogurt to bearnaise is considered normal. A Nordic pizza can be topped with anything from the classic Italian toppings to falu sausage or banana, peanuts and curry powder, or, as previously mentioned, kebab meat. A Nordic pizza does not have real mozzarella on it – it should be made using a grated yellow, hard cheese.

In Sweden and Finland, the pizza culture is very much carried by small pizzerias and in Norway much more so by the processed food industry. Over the last thirty years, several brands of frozen homemade pizza have shaped the Norwegian way of consuming flatbreads with cheese on them. In Norway, frozen pizza consumption per capita is somewhere close to 3.5 kg (7 lb 7 oz) per year, about ten times as much as that of its neighbouring countries. As a consequence, the Norwegian pizza culture is considerably less diverse and adapted to local circumstances than what you would find in Finland or Sweden.

In Denmark, pizza just isn't quite as common as it is further north, and what's there is closer to its Italian origins than to a unique regional speciality. I imagine that this difference in development could be attributed at least in some part to the fact that Denmark is much more urbanized than the other parts of the Nordic region. A large part of the Danish population will have easy access to a bigger variety of everyday restaurants and take-out places. My theory is that they will, therefore, also consume from them in a more varied way. The motivation for pizza culture to evolve into something new simply hasn't been big enough. In a city there is always going to be more space to stay the same (some would perhaps use the word 'authentic'), as long as enough people like what you do. In the countryside, you might have to change what you offer to suit those living close by because there aren't enough of them to be picky. At the same time, those living in the countryside most often have little else to choose from – it becomes a symbiotic relationship of mutual development.

BASIC PIZZA DOUGH

Pizzadeg (Sweden)

Classic Swedish pizzas include: *Vesuvio* (ham and cheese pizza); *Capricciosa* (ham, cheese and mushroom pizza); *Hawaii* (ham, cheese and pineapple pizza); *Oxfilé pizza* (cheese and beef tenderloin pizza); *Calzone* (ham and cheese pizza, folded over); *Pizza med reinsdyr og granateple* (reindeer and pomegranate pizza), and *Kebabpizza* (kebab pizza), and *pizza med Kyckling curry och banan* (pizza with chicken, curry and banana). Tomato sauce is included in all pizzas.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Rising time: 30 minutes
Makes: 4 individual or 2 large pizzas

50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
2 teaspoons sugar
2 teaspoons salt
50 ml/2 fl oz (3½ tablespoons) olive oil
450 g/1 lb (3¼ cups) strong wheat flour,
plus extra for dusting

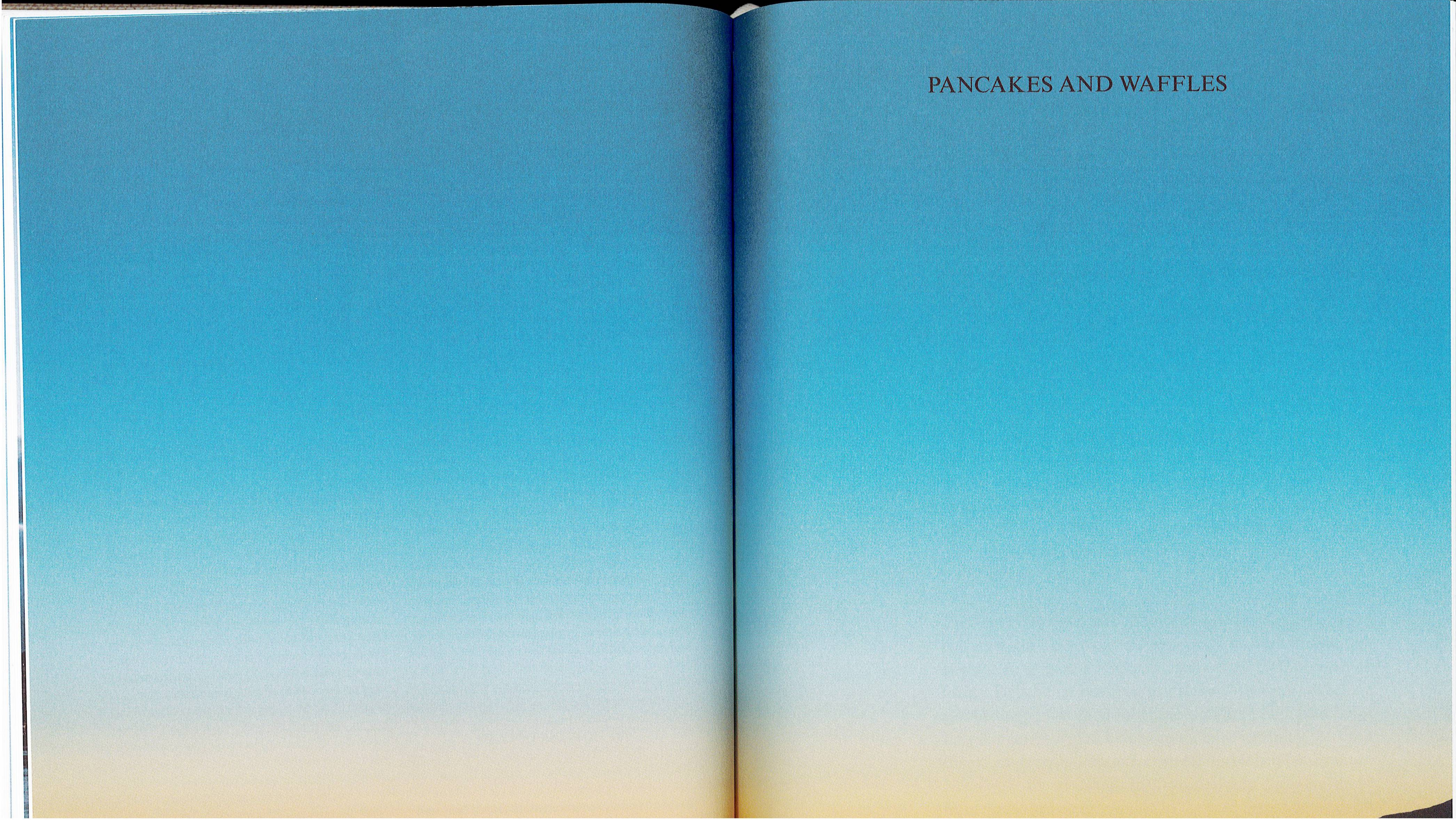
Mix the yeast, sugar, salt and oil together with 300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) water at body temperature (37°C/98.6°F) in the bowl of a stand mixer and stir until the yeast has dissolved. Add the flour, little by little, and work with the dough hook until the dough is firm and elastic. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for about 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7 and place 2 baking sheets inside.

Divide the dough into 2 or 4 equal pieces and shape according to the type of pizza you want to make. For individual round pizzas, shape each piece of dough into a round bun before rolling it out thinly on a lightly floured work counter. For a rectangle to fit a baking sheet, just roll the dough out without first shaping it into a round bun.

Once you have your bases ready, place them on the preheated baking sheets. Add your chosen toppings and bake until golden. Transfer straight away to a wire rack or serve immediately.

PANCAKES AND WAFFLES



Previous page: Night view over river, Iceland, spring 2013.

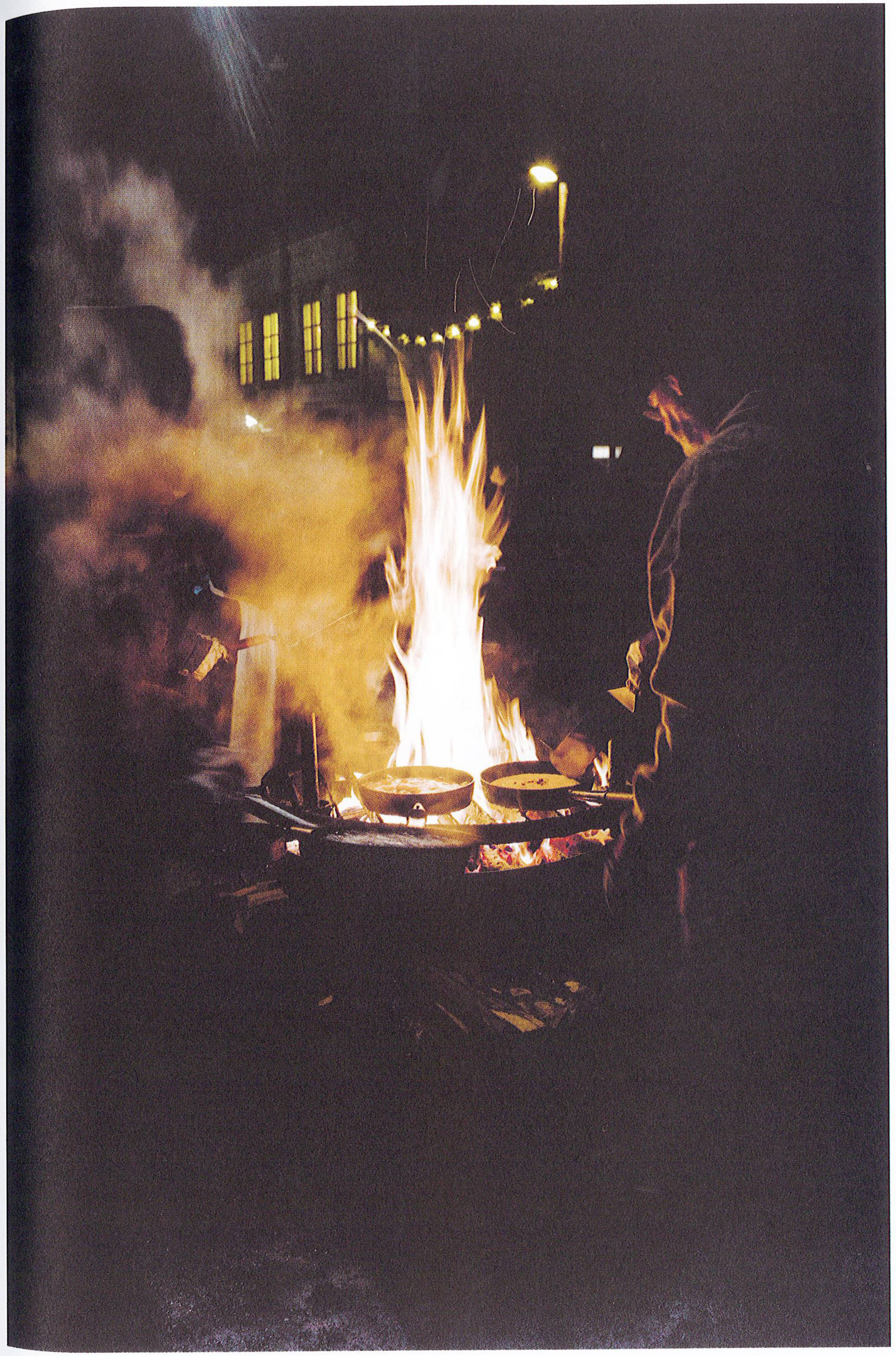
The summer sun was shining through the old kitchen window of our summerhouse at my grandparents' farm and five-year-old me was busy experiencing a culinary revelation. You know one of those times when it feels like the world starts spinning around you for a little moment of happiness.

It started with the delicate sweet crunch of not-yet-melted sugar crystals and continued with juicy, saliva-inducing orange acidity carried to the mouth enveloped in a carefully rolled-up package. The pancake was coloured yellow and tasted rich from the eggs from the farm down the road. The kitchen smelled warm and comforting from a lightly buttered pan on a wood-fired stove and the sounds of cast-iron on cast-iron mixed with those of my family having dinner.

Pancakes are a significant part of food culture all over the Nordic region and have been so for a long time. They vary in size, shape, and, according to where in the region you are, different variations are eaten at different times of the day and in different situations, from breakfast to lunch, snacks and dinner, and even layered with cream and jam as a cake for birthdays (page 469).

I imagine that pancakes became an important part of food culture in the Nordics, and especially in Scandinavia, because a large part of the population used to live on small farms. Depending on what you serve with them, pancakes can be the perfect food for those working in the fields. Not only do they provide a lot of energy, but everything you need to make them can be found on an old-fashioned family farm. Milk from the cow, eggs from the chicken coop and flour from grains grown in summer in the field before being dried and ground into flour were all readily available and cheap commodities for the old-fashioned farming community.

Opposite: Cooking kolbullar (Eggless Pancakes, page 228) over an open fire, 2017.



THIN PANCAKES

Pannukakur (Faroe Islands)
Pannekaker (Norway)
Lettujalräiskäleitä (Finland)
Pandekage (Denmark)
Tunnpannkaka / Plättar (Sweden)

These thin, delicate and eggy pancakes are enjoyed in many parts of the Nordic region. They are served with a huge variety of toppings but the most common ones would be some kind of jam (pages 510–11) or fruit compote (pages 523–5) and a dollop of cream. Or just a sprinkling of sugar.

Nordic pancakes are cooked quite thin and the batter is therefore very liquid. They contain more eggs than their Central European relatives and are therefore a bit more fragile to work with. The technique for cooking them is to have your pan quite hot and lightly buttered, then you pour in the amount of batter required and tilt the pan in all different directions until the batter has completely coated the bottom of the pan. Do not attempt to turn your pancakes over until they have cooked all the way through. If you have a good pan, you can easily flip them from the pan into the air, avoiding the use of tools, which can easily pierce them. If this fails, or you don't want to sacrifice a few practise ones, use an offset spatula to turn them over.

Thin pancakes can be made in many different sizes, the most common being simply the diameter of a normal frying pan. There are also pans with up to 7 circular indentations producing very small pancakes, on average 8 cm/3 inches in diameter. In Sweden these small pancakes, especially suitable for dessert, are called *plättar*. This word can be a bit deceptive though, because in Finland all pancakes cooked on the stove-top will be referred to as *plättar* by Swedish-speaking Finns.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 12–15 pancakes, depending on the size of the pan

150 g/5 oz (1¼ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 tablespoons sugar
5 eggs
600 ml/20 fl oz (2½ cups) milk
good pinch of salt
melted butter, for frying

Mix all the ingredients in a bowl, mixing the milk in last, little by little, until you have a smooth batter and no lumps remain.

Heat a frying pan or skillet to just over a medium heat, butter it lightly and ladle some batter into it. Tilt the pan so that it coats the bottom of the pan evenly. Cook until the batter has set completely and the pancake has a nice golden colour, then flip it over with an offset spatula and cook the other side until golden.

Transfer the cooked pancake to a warm plate. Repeat with the rest of the batter, stacking the cooked pancakes as you go, so that they remain warm.

ICELANDIC OATMEAL PANCAKES

Lummur (Iceland)

These thick pancakes, often made with leftover oatmeal or pearl barley porridge, are served either with sugar or jam (pages 510–11), or with savoury toppings, like cheese or lamb.

The recipe below has the oats added straight to the batter; I guess that most people don't have cold oat porridge lying around much.

You can fry these pancakes in a heavy-bottomed frying pan or skillet, two or three at a time, or use a special pan for small pancakes called a *plättjärn*.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 10 pancakes

150 g/5 oz (1¼ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
75 g/2¾ oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons) rolled oats
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 tablespoon sugar
250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) milk
1 egg
good pinch of salt
butter, for frying

Combine all of the ingredients for the batter in a mixing bowl and stir together, making sure no lumps remain.

Heat some butter in a frying pan, skillet or *plättjärn* over a medium heat. Spoon batter into the pan, until the bottom is almost covered. Fry over a medium heat until the underside is golden and the *lummur* is starting to set. Turn it over carefully with an offset spatula and fry the other side until golden.

Remove the *lummur* from the pan and keep warm while you continue with the rest of the batter.

ICELANDIC FISH PANCAKES

Fisklummur (Iceland)

These pancakes are made with leftover fish, preferably white fish. Serve with potatoes and melted butter.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 6–8 pancakes

1 boiled, boned fish fillet
3–4 cooked potatoes, chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
good pinch of salt
5–6 tablespoons weak (soft) wheat flour
2 eggs, beaten
milk
butter, for frying

Flake the cooked fish with a fork and put it in a bowl. Add the chopped potatoes and onion and season with the salt. Add the flour, then the beaten eggs and mix. Add enough milk to achieve a thick, pourable yogurt consistency.

Heat a frying pan or skillet over a medium heat. Butter the frying pan and ladle some of the batter into it. You are aiming to get 6–8 pancakes in total so divide the batter accordingly. When the cooked side is nicely golden, carefully turn the pancake over and cook the other side.

Remove the pancake from the pan and keep warm while you continue with the rest of the batter.

NORWEGIAN WHEAT PANCAKES

Lapper (Norway)

Lapper is a sort of thick leavened pancake common in Norway. Although usually made today with just wheat flour, as shown here, they were traditionally more often made with a mix of flours including a more coarse one like barley (page 226) or oats as in the recipe on page 226.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Resting time: 30 minutes
Makes: 20 pancakes

240 g/8½ oz (2 cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) milk
5 eggs
45 g/1¾ oz (3 tablespoons) sugar
3 tablespoons butter, melted and left
  to cool a little, plus extra for frying
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking powder

Add all the ingredients to the bowl of a food processor fitted with the blade attachment and pulse until smooth and there are no lumps. Leave to stand for 30 minutes.

Lightly butter a frying pan or skillet. Add generous spoonfuls of batter to the pan; you will need to fry them in batches and don't overcrowd the pan. Fry the pancakes over a medium heat. They should be fried until lightly golden before being flipped over with an offset spatula and cooked on the other side.

Remove the *lapper* from the pan and keep warm while you continue with the rest of the batter.

NORWEGIAN BARLEY PANCAKES

Byggmelslapper (Norway)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Resting time: 30 minutes
Makes: 20 small pancakes

- 2 eggs
- 400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) cultured milk
- 180 g/6½ oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)
- 60 g/2¼ oz (¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons) barley flour
- 210 g/7¼ oz (1¾ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
- pinch of salt
- soft butter, for frying

Place the eggs, cultured milk and sugar in a bowl and whisk until combined. Sift the remaining ingredients into the bowl and mix with a stiff balloon whisk until smooth and there are no lumps. Cover and leave to stand for 30 minutes.

Lightly butter a frying pan or skillet. Add generous spoonfuls of batter to the pan; you will need to fry them in batches and don't overcrowd the pan. Fry the pancakes over a medium heat until the underside is lightly golden, then flip them over with an offset spatula and fry on the other side.

Remove the pancakes from the pan and keep warm while you continue with the rest of the batter.

NORWEGIAN OAT PANCAKES

Grove havrepannekaker (Norway)

This is a thin pancake made with oatmeal. It is popular for dinner in Norway, or cold for lunch.

Preparation and cooking time: 10 minutes
Resting time: 30 minutes
Makes: 10 pancakes

- 120 g/4 oz (1 cup) plain (all-purpose) flour
- 80 g/3 oz (⅔ cup) oatmeal
- pinch of salt
- 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) milk
- 4 eggs
- butter, for frying

Place the flour, oatmeal and salt in a bowl, then pour in about half of the milk and stir vigorously using a balloon whisk until smooth and there are no lumps. Add the remaining milk and the eggs and whisk until combined. Cover and leave to stand for 30 minutes.

Lightly butter a frying pan or skillet. Add generous spoonfuls of batter to the pan; you will need to fry them in batches and don't overcrowd the pan. Fry the pancake over a medium heat until the underside is lightly golden, then flip it over with an offset spatula and fry on the other side.

Remove the pancake from the pan and keep warm while you continue with the rest of the batter.

NORWEGIAN THICK PANCAKES WITH OR WITHOUT BUTTERCREAM

Sveler (Norway)

Sveler are similar to an American-style thick pancake leavened with a little bicarbonate of soda (baking soda). They can be eaten warm with jam and *rømme* (Norwegian cultured cream) or sugar, but are more well known served cold, sandwiched together with a buttercream filling – more like a pastry than a dish. You also might see cold buttered *sveler* sprinkled with sugar before being stacked together in twos as a packed lunch on a family skiing trip.

The practice of filling them with buttercream began on the ferryboats on the west coast of Norway in the early 1970s when they were served as a snack in the cafeteria. It is still symbolic for those same ferries.

They are so sweet and rich when they are served with buttercream that you will want to go to the dentist and never eat processed flour and white sugar again. However, there is still something strangely intriguing about the texture of cold fluffy pancakes and stiff butter. Once you have started eating one it is impossible to stop until there is nothing left.

This recipe is the actual recipe from the ferryboats; it contains margarine, which I personally never use. However, I tried making them with butter and it doesn't taste quite the same. It will work with butter, but it doesn't taste like it does on the ferryboat.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Resting time: 30 minutes
Makes: 24 pancakes or 12 filled pancakes

For the pancakes
- 4 eggs
- 250 g/9 oz (1¼ cups) sugar
- 125 g/4½ oz (9 tablespoons) margarine, melted and cooled
- 1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) cultured milk
- 750 g/1 lb 10 oz (6¼ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
- 1½ tablespoons bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)
- butter, for frying

For the buttercream (optional)
- 190 g/7 oz (1½ sticks plus 1⅓ tablespoons) butter
- 125 g/4½ oz (½ cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
- 190 g/7 oz (1½ cups) icing (confectioners') sugar

Place the eggs and sugar in a bowl and mix until pale and fluffy. Add the margarine and stir until it is completely combined, then add the cultured milk and stir a little more. Add the flour and bicarbonate of soda (baking soda) and stir with a whisk just until there are no lumps left. Cover and leave to rest for 30 minutes.

Lightly butter a frying pan or skillet. Add generous spoonfuls of batter to the pan; you will need to fry them in batches and don't overcrowd the pan. This batch should make 24 pancakes. Fry the pancakes over a medium heat until the underside is lightly golden, then flip them over with an offset spatula and fry on the other side. Either serve warm or cool on a wire rack and proceed as below.

To make the buttercream, put all of the ingredients into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and work until fluffy and smooth. Spread the buttercream over 12 of the cold pancakes and add the other 12 as tops.

ICELANDIC THICK PANCAKES / PAN-FRIED BREAD

Skonsur (Iceland)

These are thick, leavened American-style pancakes that are very common in Iceland. They are either eaten warm with toppings like rhubarb jam (pages 510–11) or cold as the base for a sandwich.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 8–12 pancakes depending on size of pan

- 270 g/9½ oz (2¼ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar
- 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) milk
- 2 eggs
- butter, for frying

Mix the dry ingredients together in a bowl, then add the milk and eggs and whisk until you have a smooth batter and no lumps remain.

Heat a frying pan or skillet over a medium heat. Butter the frying pan and ladle some batter into it. You are aiming to get 8–12 thick pancakes in total so divide the batter accordingly. When bubbles appear in the batter and the cooked side is nicely golden, it is time to flip it over with an offset spatula and cook the other side. Transfer the cooked pancake to a warm plate.

Repeat with the rest of the batter, stacking the pancakes as you go, so that they remain warm.

Serve warm with sweet toppings or cold with sandwich toppings.

NORWEGIAN THICK SALT-PORK PANCAKES

Fleskepannekaker (Norway)

In Norway, a salt-pork or bacon pancake can be made in various ways. It can be pan fried, as here, or it can be a thick oven-baked pancake, like the Swedish *fläskpannkaka* on page 230.

This version is often served with finely cut chives, and sometimes a bit of *rømme* (Norwegian cultured cream), or even grated cheese. I have also seen a recipe or two that suggest fried apple wedges as an accompaniment. The Swedish version of this dish is usually served with Sugared Lingonberries (page 514).

Preparation and cooking time: 35 minutes
Makes: 4–6 pancakes

100 g/3½ oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) weak (soft) wheat flour
5 eggs
good pinch of salt
550 ml/20 fl oz (2 cups plus 1 tablespoon) milk
butter, for frying
300 g/11 oz salt pork or bacon, sliced or cut into sticks

Combine the flour, eggs, salt and half the milk in a mixing bowl and whisk until no lumps remain. Add the rest of the milk, whisking continuously.

Heat a little butter in a frying pan or skillet and add a generous amount of the salt pork or bacon sticks. Fry until they start to brown a little, then ladle in some batter. You are aiming to get 4–6 pancakes in total, so divide the pork and batter accordingly. Fry the pancake until the underside is golden, then turn and fry on the other side. Keep warm while you fry the remaining pancakes and serve with your choice of accompaniments.

BARLEY FLOUR AND SALT-PORK EGGLESS PANCAKES

Kolbullar (Sweden)

This is an old dish predominately from Sweden and Finland, where forestry was traditionally (and is still today) very important. The name is made from joining of the Swedish words for charcoal, *kol*, and bun, *bulle*. It refers to those people, *kolare*, who moved along with the loggers and produced charcoal and tar in turf kilns. The batter consists of only flour, water and salt even though today many people add eggs and milk to it, more like a normal pancake. The salt pork should be dry-salted back bacon with a thick rind of fat. This was called *Amerikafläsk*, American pork, as it was salted enough to last through a trip to America with the sailing vessels of the time. We eat this with the family when we are out fishing in the summer or hunting in autumn (fall). It's very greasy but super delicious. Enjoy it straight from the pan with Sugared Lingonberries (page 514).

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Resting time: 1 hour
Makes: 2 big pancakes

480 g/17 oz (4 cups) weak (soft) wheat flour or 240 g/8½ oz (2 cups) weak (soft) wheat flour and 160 g/5½ oz (1 cup) barley flour
pinch of salt
300 g/11 oz salt pork, cut into sticks
Sugared Lingonberries (page 514), to serve

In a bowl, add the flour to 600 ml/20 fl oz (2½ cups) water, little by little, whisking all the time, until you get a batter a bit thicker than a 'thin pancake' one. Add the salt. Leave the batter to rest for 1 hour. It will get a bit thicker.

Heat a frying pan or skillet over an open fire or over low heat on the stove. Add half of the salt pork and fry it. Once the fat has rendered, increase the heat to brown the pork. Pour half of the batter over the pork and rendered fat and cook until set. Flip it over and cook the other side. The outside of this pancake should be crispy, almost fried. Keep warm while you fry the remaining salt pork and batter. Serve with sugared lingonberries.

DANISH THICK CREAM PANCAKES

Flødepandekager (Denmark)

Enjoy these pancakes piping hot, sprinkled with sugar and perhaps with some tart jam on the side.

Preparation and cooking time: 35 minutes
Makes: 20 small pancakes

300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) cream
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) Danish *ymer*, cultured milk or yogurt
2 eggs
1 tablespoon sugar
220 g/7¾ oz (1¾ cups plus 1 tablespoon) weak (soft) wheat flour
good pinch of salt
butter, for frying

Whip the cream to stiff peaks, then fold in the cultured dairy product.

In a separate bowl, beat the eggs with the sugar, then add to the whipped cream. Sift the flour and salt together into the bowl and mix the batter gently until just combined.

Melt a knob of butter in a frying pan or skillet. Add generous spoonfuls of batter to the pan; you will need to fry them in batches and don't overcrowd the pan. Fry the *flødelapper* over a medium heat until the undersides are golden. They should puff up quite a bit and it isn't always easy to turn them. Once they are cooked on both sides, eat them hot from the pan, with sugar and jam.

SUGARED PANCAKES LEAVENED WITH BAKING POWDER

Amerikanske pandekager (Denmark)
Krabbelurer / Pösplättar (Sweden)

These thick pancakes are a bit like something in between actual pancakes and sponge cake, a bit like an American pancake perhaps. They are turned in sugar after being fried and either eaten straight away with jam (pages 510–11) and whipped cream, or left to cool and eaten later like a pastry.

To get them nice and round, fry them in a small pancake iron known as a *plättjärn*. If you don't have a *plättjärn* pan, use an ordinary frying pan or skillet and live with them not being perfectly round but equally delicious.

Sometimes *krabbelurer* are flavoured with vanilla, and other times with lemon zest or cardamom. I tend to like them with vanilla, or else just as they are.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 20 small pancakes

1 egg
75 g/2¾ oz (⅓ cup plus ½ tablespoon) sugar
350 ml/12 fl oz (1½ cups) milk
good pinch of salt
vanilla, lemon zest or ground cardamom, to taste (optional)
150 g/5 oz (1¼ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
butter, for frying

To serve
plenty of sugar
jam (pages 510–11) or fruit compote (pages 523–5)
whipped cream

Whisk the egg and sugar together until pale and creamy. Add the milk, salt and flavouring, if using. Sift the flour and baking powder together into the bowl and mix in gently until just combined.

Melt a knob of butter in a frying pan, skillet or *plättjärn* pan. Add generous spoonfuls of batter to the pan, as neatly as you can. You will need to fry them in batches and don't overcrowd the pan. Fry over a medium heat until the undersides are golden and the *krabbelurer* are starting to set. Turn them over carefully and fry the other sides until golden. Continue with the rest of the batter.

Sprinkle a good layer of sugar on a plate. As the *krabbelurer* are cooked, turn them in the sugar. Eat them straight away with jam or compote and cream, or leave to cool on a wire rack.

THICK OVEN-BAKED PANCAKE

Uunipannukakku (Finland)
Tjockpannkaka / Ugnspannkaka (Sweden)

My dad is the true master of *tjockpannkaka*. When he makes them, they are light, fluffy, bubbly and crisp – a bit like a fried Danish pastry.

Serve with jam (pages 510–11), Sugared Lingonberries (page 514) and cream, or with a sprinkling of sugar.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Serves: 4

250 g/9 oz (2 cups plus 1 tablespoon) weak (soft) wheat flour
4 eggs
good pinch of salt
1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) milk
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°C/Gas Mark 7.

Combine the flour, eggs, salt and half the milk in a mixing bowl and whisk until no lumps remain. Add the rest of the milk, whisking continuously.

Put the butter into a 30 x 40 cm/12 x 16 inch roasting pan and heat in the oven until the butter has completely melted.

Pour the batter into the hot pan and bake for 25–30 minutes until it is dark golden and completely set.

Remove from the oven and leave to sit for 5 minutes, which will make it much easier to remove from the pan. Serve with your preferred combination of accompaniments.

THICK OVEN-BAKED SALT-PORK PANCAKE

Fläskpannkaka (Sweden)

Follow the recipe for the Thick Oven-Baked Pancake (above), but add 300 g/11 oz salt pork, cut into sticks, to the roasting pan and bake in the oven for 5 minutes or so until starting to colour before you pour in the batter. Serve with Sugared Lingonberries (page 514).

THICK OVEN-BAKED PANCAKE WITH APPLE

Äppelpannkaka (Sweden)

Follow the recipe for Thick Oven-Baked Pancake (left), but add 2 apples cut into slices to the buttered roasting pan and sprinkle some sugar and ground cinnamon on top, before you pour in the batter.

OVEN-BAKED SCANIAN EGG CAKE

Äggakaka (Sweden)

This is an eggy version of the Thick Oven-Baked Pancake (left). It is a traditional dish from the southern Swedish region of Skåne. Serve with Sugared Lingonberries (page 514) and slices of Fried Salt Pork (page 538).

To make this dish properly you need an ovenproof frying pan, preferably a cast-iron one.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Serves: 4

400 g/14 oz Salt Pork Fried in the Pan (page 538)

For the batter
120 g/4 oz (1 cup) weak (soft) wheat flour
10 eggs
3 tablespoons sugar
good pinch of salt
650 ml/22 fl oz (2½ cups plus 3 tablespoons) milk

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7.

When you fry the pork, leave the cooking fat in the ovenproof frying pan or skillet to fry the egg cake in, just remove the pork itself and set aside.

To make the batter, combine the flour, eggs, sugar, salt and half the milk in a mixing bowl and whisk until no lumps remain. Add the rest of the milk, whisking continuously.

Heat the greased frying pan over a medium heat. Pour in the batter and fry until it starts to firm up a bit around the edges and is a good golden colour on the underside. Turn the egg cake over carefully, which will be difficult as it will be fragile and still runny inside. I recommend using a plate or a pot lid for support when doing the actual flip.

Transfer the pan to the oven and bake for 10 minutes. Arrange the pork on top of the egg cake and return to the oven for a final 5 minutes, which will help it crisp up a bit.

BLOOD PANCAKES

Blodpannekake (Norway)
Veriohukaiset (Finland)
Blodpannkaka (Sweden)

Some recipes contain onion, and if you want to try this then adding one onion, finely chopped, is enough for this recipe. I think it is a good idea to fry it in some butter until soft before adding it; this might be a little less authentic, but is very tasty.

There is also a difference in the types of flour used between different recipes. Some have a mix of rye and wheat flour, and others are all wheat or all rye. The Finnish recipes definitely contain a larger proportion of rye flour than those from the Scandinavian countries.

Blood pancakes in Finland also do not contain eggs, as opposed to the ones in, for example, Sweden. This recipe is more Finnish in style but works just as well with the addition of two eggs. The pancakes will become a little more tender and you can fry them slightly thinner in the pan.

Some recipes for blood pancake contain no real seasoning except salt, while others contain sweet spices like cloves, allspice and pepper. Others contain dried marjoram, like many other dishes containing blood.

Serve the blood pancakes with Sugared Lingonberries (page 514) and slices of Fried Salt Pork (page 538).

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Serves: 4

1 onion, finely chopped (optional)
butter, for frying
500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) blood, strained
250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) *Svagdricka* or beer
200 g/7 oz (1¾ cups) flour (use rye, wheat or a mixture of both)
70 g/2½ oz (3½ tablespoons) golden syrup
good pinch of salt
your choice of flavourings, to taste (cloves, allspice, pepper, dried marjoram)
2 eggs (optional)

If using onion, then fry it in butter over a medium heat until soft and translucent. Transfer to a large mixing bowl and leave to cool.

Add all the remaining ingredients to the cooled onions (including the eggs, if using) and whisk until there are no lumps. Let the batter sit at room temperature for at least 30 minutes before frying.

Use an ordinary frying pan, skillet or a special small pancake pan called a *plättjärn* to fry the blood pancakes. (The batter is liquid and it fills the whole pan in one thin layer.) Add a generous spoonful of batter to the pan. Fry on a medium heat until the underside is golden and the pancake is starting to set. Turn it over carefully and fry the other side until golden. Remove the pancake from the pan and keep warm while you continue with the rest of the batter.

WAFFLES

Waffles are served all over the Nordic region and each country has got a multitude of recipes. Some have eggs in them and others don't. In general terms a waffle with eggs will be less crisp and richer than one without. Some versions are leavened with yeast or chemical leavening agents and others are not. If leavened with yeast or not at all, the recipe will produce a pancake-like texture and if leavened with chemical leavening agents, a shorter texture. Waffles are often served as lunch, a snack in the afternoon or as a dessert. In Norway, waffles can also be found with Brown Cheese (page 537) for breakfast. In the whole Nordic region, waffles are most commonly cooked in the classic Scandinavian waffle iron, which produces heart-shaped pieces (for image see page opposite).

EGG WAFFLES

Äggvåfflor (Sweden)

Waffles containing egg get a soft texture and taste a bit like good pancakes. Enjoy them hot off the waffle iron with some whipped cream and jam (pages 510–11).

Preparation and cooking time: 25 minutes
Makes: 10 waffles

500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) milk
150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons) butter
2 eggs
good pinch of salt
250 g/9 oz (2 cups plus 1 tablespoon) weak (soft) wheat flour
melted butter, for brushing

Combine the milk and butter in a pan and heat until the butter has melted. Remove from the heat, tip into a mixing bowl and leave to cool a bit.

Add the eggs and salt to the cooled milk mixture and mix in well. Sift over the flour and stir the batter until no lumps remain.

Heat your waffle iron to proper working temperature and brush it very lightly with melted butter. Pour in a suitable amount of batter and cook until nice and golden. Repeat with the rest of the batter.

CRISP WAFFLES

Vohveleita (Finland)
Sprøde vafler (Denmark)
Frasvåfflor (Sweden)

My favourite kind of waffle, crisp and delicate in an almost unreal way. Enjoy them hot off the iron with whipped cream and jam (pages 510–11).

Preparation and cooking time: 25 minutes
Makes: 10 waffles

180 g/6½ oz (1½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
good pinch of salt
good pinch of sugar
300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) cream
melted butter, for brushing

Pour 200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) of water into a mixing bowl. Stir in the flour, salt and sugar to form a batter.

Whip the cream to soft peaks and fold it into the batter gently. It should be fully combined, but not over-mixed.

Heat your waffle iron to proper working temperature and brush it very lightly with melted butter. Pour in a suitable amount of batter and cook until nice and golden. Repeat with the rest of the batter.

For image see page opposite

Crisp Waffles (page 232)

NORWEGIAN WAFFLES

Vaffel (Norway)

Norwegian waffles almost always contain eggs and sometimes cardamom or Vanilla Sugar (page 536). They are generally served with jam (pages 510–11) and whipped cream or *rømme* (Norwegian cultured cream) or with Brown Cheese (page 537), or sometimes with savoury condiments like sausage and cured meats.

Preparation and cooking time: 40 minutes
Resting time: at least 1 hour
Makes: 10 waffles

250 g/9 oz (2 cups plus 1 tablespoon) weak (soft) wheat flour
5 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
ground cardamom or Vanilla Sugar (page 536), to taste
pinch of salt
400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) milk
5 eggs, lightly beaten
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, melted and cooled, plus extra for brushing

Mix all of the dry ingredients in a bowl, including the cardamom or vanilla sugar and a pinch of salt. Pour in the milk, little by little, mixing all the time so that no lumps form. Add the eggs and the melted butter, mix well and leave the batter to sit for at least an hour to swell.

Heat your waffle iron to proper working temperature and brush it very lightly with melted butter. Pour in a suitable amount of batter and cook until nice and golden. Repeat with the remaining batter. Serve warm or cold.

NORWEGIAN CULTURED CREAM WAFFLES / RØMME WAFFLES

Rømmevafler (Norway)

This is possibly the world's most filling waffle, and one of the most cherished Norwegian recipes. They contain about double the amount of *rømme* (Norwegian cultured cream) compared to flour, which means that when the batter heats up in the waffle iron it splits and the waffles almost deep-fry in that cheesy, acidic fat from the cream.

This particular recipe comes from the family of Andreas Viestead (page 19) who helped me with getting the Norwegian content of this book right. Eat them hot, straight from the waffle iron.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Resting time: 30 minutes
Makes: 20 waffles

750 g/1 lb 2 oz (3⅓ cups) *rømme*
300 g/11 oz (2½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
3 tablespoons sugar
1½ teaspoons baking powder
soft butter, for frying

Add the *rømme* and 250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) water to a large bowl and mix together. Add the flour, sugar and baking powder by sifting them together into the bowl. Stir with force using a stiff balloon whisk until no lumps remain. Leave the batter to rest for 30 minutes.

Heat your Scandinavian-style waffle iron (page 233) to proper working temperature and brush it very lightly with butter. Pour a suitable amount of the rested batter into the waffle iron and cook until golden brown and crispy. Repeat with the rest of the batter.

ICELANDIC WAFFLES

Vöfflur (Iceland)

Icelandic waffles are usually rich egg waffles, often leavened, in traditional recipes with yeast and in more recent ones with baking powder. The batter is commonly flavoured with vanilla, ground cinnamon, cardamom or grated lemon zest.

In Iceland, waffles are eaten as a treat in the afternoon or sometimes as dessert, often with whipped cream and berries or jam (pages 510–11). Waffles in Iceland are most often cooked in the Scandinavian-style waffle iron (see page 233), producing heart-shaped pieces of waffle.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 8 waffles

2 eggs
250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) milk
400 g/14 oz (3½ cups plus 1 tablespoon) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
3 tablespoons sugar
salt, to taste
vanilla, ground cinnamon, cardamom or grated lemon zest, to taste (optional)
120 g/4 oz (1 stick) butter, melted

Whisk the eggs and milk together in a large bowl. Sift the flour, baking powder, sugar and salt into the egg mixture and incorporate with the help of a whisk to avoid lumps forming. Add flavourings, if you are using any.

Heat your waffle iron to proper working temperature and brush it very lightly with melted butter. Pour the rest of the butter into the batter and mix in well. Pour a suitable amount of batter into the waffle iron and cook until nice and golden. Repeat with the remaining batter. Serve immediately.

FAROESE WAFFLES

Vaflur (Faroe Islands)

Faroese waffles are rich and sweet, and are mostly eaten for dessert or as a sweet snack between meals.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Serves: 4

75 g/2½ oz (5 tablespoons) butter
150 g/5 oz (¾ cup) sugar
pinch of salt
3 eggs
275 g/9¾ oz (2¼ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) milk
melted butter, for brushing

Combine the butter, sugar and salt in a large bowl and beat well. Beat in the eggs, one by one. Sift the flour, baking powder and vanilla sugar into the bowl and beat well. Pour in the milk, little by little, beating all the time so that no lumps form.

Heat your waffle iron to proper working temperature and brush it very lightly with melted butter. Pour in a suitable amount of batter and cook until nice and golden. Repeat with the rest of the batter. Serve warm or cold.

FRENCH TOAST

Arme riddere (Norway)
Köyhät ritarit (Finland)
Fattiga riddare (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 8 French toasts

120 g/4 oz (1 cup) weak (soft) wheat flour
good pinch of salt
2 eggs
400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) milk
8 slices toasted bread
1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
4 tablespoons sugar
butter, for frying

Mix the flour, salt, eggs and milk together in a bowl, mixing the milk in last, little by little, until you have a smooth batter and no lumps remain.

Soak the bread in the batter for a few minutes. Mix the cinnamon and sugar on a plate.

Heat a frying pan or skillet over medium heat. Butter the frying pan and then add the slices of battered toast. You might need to add the slices in batches. Cook the toast on both sides until a nice golden colour.

Place the fried toast slices in the cinnamon and sugar mix and coat on both sides.

PORRIDGE AND GRAIN SOUPS

Previous page: Wheat, Skåne, Sweden.

When I was growing up, a weekday breakfast would pretty much consist of one of two things depending on the season: cold cultured milk (*filmjölk*) in summer and warm porridge from rolled oats during winter. Sandwiches, eggs, toast and other extravagant food, like Frosties, were mostly reserved to, and exclusively eaten on, weekends. I think this routine in my early life came about mostly out of habit from my parents' side and not for any deeper ideological or health reasons. Modern people mostly say they love change, individuality and discovering new things, but for breakfast this point of view seems to be entirely put to the side and replaced by routine-bound, almost endless repetition. When you run a restaurant with rooms, like I do at Fäviken, you get the chance to observe people in the early morning hours, people who could be characterized as somewhat adventurous, and it's impossible not to be fascinated by this behaviour.

My daily childhood winter bowl of porridge was made from rolled oats, water and a pinch of salt (milk and semolina on Fridays), and it was served with cold milk on the side and either a sprinkling of sugar or a spoonful of sweet and tart Sugared Lingonberries (page 514). As opposed to many other daily childhood routines which I actively dislike today (such as cross-country skiing), probably because they were imposed on me, I still love oats. There is something really special about the deep, rich mineral flavour of them; a flavour that no other grain possesses, regardless of whether it is porridge or in muesli or a topping on a crumble.

Some variety of porridge or gruel might well have been one of the first cooked dishes invented by man when we tamed fire and stopped being hunter-gatherers. I imagine it being sort of one step in history after a mammoth fell on a fire in a tree stump lit by lightning and cooked itself to the immense pleasure and surprise of our forefathers. In the Nordics we have been eating grains for as long as we have been growing them (pages 22–33), and initially it was perhaps more common to enjoy porridge as a main meal containing some fish or meat boiled together with the grains. Most of the grains that are used for porridge today are treated in some way. Oats are commonly rolled and steamed, and semolina is the very finely ground middlings of wheat. The reason for these treatments is mostly practical, as it makes it easier for us to prepare them by shortening the cooking process. To boil a hulled but whole grain of barley you would first have to soak it overnight in water and then boil it for several hours to make it soft and tasty. This is in contrast to oat porridge made from rolled oats, which takes perhaps 5 minutes to make from start to finish.

Savoury grain soups, called *välling* in Swedish are a sort of thin porridge. They can be made from any of the grains used in porridge and with either milk or water or both. The difference is that you can drink them, unlike porridge where you need a spoon. Most of the time they are served without condiments and I would say that today not many adults eat these soups anymore. However, most children do and most families buy instant *välling* in packets from the supermarket, where they just add water to powder and heat.

RICE PORRIDGE

Jólagrautu (Iceland)
Risengrynsgrøt (Norway)
Riisipuuro (Finland)
Risengrød (Denmark)
Julgröt / Risgrynsgröt / Tomtegröt (Sweden)

Rice porridge is eaten all year round in most Nordic countries, although sparingly. On or around Christmas, however, most families will eat it – either as it is warm, or as part of a Rice Pudding (page 488). It was – and is still – common to hide an almond in the Christmas porridge. The person finding it will, in Denmark, Norway, Iceland and southern Sweden, receive a gift called an 'almond gift', often a sweet (candy). In most parts of Sweden and in Finland, according to folklore, the person finding the almond will get married during the coming year.

Rice porridge is most often eaten warm with cold milk and a sprinkling of sugar and ground cassia cinnamon. Sometimes a knob of butter is added to the bowl and some people will have their porridge with Cordial Soup (page 514) in the bowl and a glass of milk on the side.

I like to cook my porridge with a stick of cassia cinnamon bobbing around in it for the whole process.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Serves: 4

180 g/6½ oz (1½ cup plus 2 tablespoons)
short-grain rice
good pinch of salt
800 ml/28 fl oz (3¼ cups) milk
1 cassia cinnamon stick (optional)

Put the rice and salt in a pot and add 400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) water. Bring to the boil over a medium heat, stirring constantly. Lower the heat and stir in the milk. Add the cinnamon stick if using. Continue simmering for another 35 minutes, stirring every now and then. You don't want to break up the grains of rice too much.

If the porridge becomes too thick before the rice has softened, adjust the consistency with more milk.

ROLLED OAT PORRIDGE

Havregrøt (Norway)
Kaurapuuro (Finland)
Havregrød (Denmark)
Havregrynsgröt (Sweden)

I would say that this is probably one of the most common breakfasts eaten in Sweden. Enjoy hot with cold milk, sugar or Sugared Lingonberries (page 514).

Preparation and cooking time: 15 minutes
Serves: 4

160 g/5½ oz (1¾ cups plus 2 tablespoons)
rolled oats
1 teaspoon salt

Put the oats and salt in a pot and add 1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) water. Bring to the boil over a medium heat, stirring constantly. Lower the heat and continue simmering for 10 minutes, or until the oats are cooked and the right texture is achieved.

DRY PORRIDGE MADE FROM TOASTED OAT OR BARLEY FLOUR

Nævagraut (Norway)
Mutti (Finland)
Nävgröt / Motti (Sweden)

This dish originates from Finland where it has remained under the name *mutti*. It was introduced to Sweden, and subsequently Norway, during the sixteenth century when many Finns moved west with hopes of a better life. The Finnish original was, and is still, made from barley flour in most regions. However, in a few Finnish regions and in the Swedish and Norwegian versions, a toasted oat flour called *talkkuna* in Finnish, *talkon* by Swedish-speaking Finns and *skrädmjöl* in Sweden and Norway, is used.

The name of the dish in Swedish and Norwegian is *nävgröt*, meaning fist porridge, indicating that it was eaten with your hands. As you probably understand, this porridge is barely even a porridge when it comes to texture, its almost like a crumbly, savoury short pastry. Most commonly *mutti/nävgröt* is eaten with Fried Salt Pork (page 538) and sometimes Sugared Lingonberries (page 514). You eat it by picking up pieces of the porridge before dipping them in the fat from the frying of the pork. In some regions béchamel sauce is served on the side. An older Finnish book describes the texture of *mutti* as varying between that of coarse gravel (called sand *mutti*) to containing fist-sized pieces of crumb (called fist *mutti*).

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Serves: 4

1 teaspoon salt
250 g/9 oz toasted oat or plain barley flour
400 g/14 oz Fried Salt Pork (page 538)

Pour 300 ml/10½ fl oz (1¼ cups) water into a large frying pan or skillet. Add the salt and bring to the boil. Tip in the flour, all at once. Don't stir, but instead, press down on the flour with a large wooden spoon to ensure it sinks into the water evenly. Cover the pan and remove it from the heat. Leave it to sit next to the stove until all the water has been absorbed into the flour.

Meanwhile, fry the salt pork slices according to the instructions on page 538.

Break the porridge up into pieces and serve with the slices of pork and rendered fat on top.

BARLEY FLOUR PORRIDGE

Byggmelsgrøt / Vassgraut (Norway)
Kornmjölsgröt (Sweden)

Serve hot with cold milk, jam (pages 510–11), Apple Compote (page 523) or sugar.

Preparation and cooking time: 15 minutes
Serves: 4

1 teaspoon salt
160 g/5½ oz (1 cup) barley flour

To serve, your choice of:
cold milk
sugar
jam (pages 510–11)
Apple Compote (page 523)

Pour 1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) water into a large pan, add the salt and bring to the boil. Add the flour a little at a time, whisking briskly. It is extremely important to whisk properly at this stage, as any lumps that form now will remain in the porridge until you eat it.

When all the flour has been added, simmer until the porridge has thickened and tastes of cooked grains and cereal.

CRUSHED BARLEY PORRIDGE

Byggrynsgrøt (Norway)

This is a very common everyday porridge in Norway.

Preparation and cooking time: 35–45 minutes
Soaking time: overnight
Serves: 4

1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) milk
1 teaspoon salt
150 g/5 oz (1 cup plus 2 tablespoons)
crushed barley, soaked overnight
in cold water and strained

Pour the milk into a large pan, add the salt and bring to the boil. Add the soaked barley and reduce the heat to a slow simmer. Cook the porridge for 30–40 minutes, or until it is nice in texture.

ROLLED RYE FLAKE PORRIDGE

Ruispuuro (Finland)
Rågflingegröt (Sweden)

Enjoy this porridge hot, with some pieces of dried fruit, jam (pages 510–11) or sugar and cold milk.

A lot of people like to add a half-tablespoon of linseeds (flaxseeds) per portion to this porridge to make it even richer in dietary fibre.

Preparation and cooking time: 15 minutes
Serves: 4

120 g/4 oz (1¼ cups) rolled rye flakes
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons linseeds (flaxseeds), optional

Put the rye flakes, salt and linseeds (flaxseeds), if using, into a pot with 1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) water. Bring to the boil over a medium heat, stirring constantly. Lower the heat and continue simmering for 10 minutes, or until the flakes are cooked and the right texture is achieved. If you are using linseeds, you might have to add a bit more water towards the end to adjust the texture.

RYE FLOUR PORRIDGE

Ruispuuro (Finland)
Rågmjölsgröt (Sweden)

I used to really hate this porridge when I was growing up: its gluey texture, its strong grain flavour, everything about it! Those who love it though, usually eat it with cold milk, Sugared Lingonberries (page 514), Apple Compote (page 523) or sugar, or possibly with a knob of butter melting in it.

Preparation and cooking time: 15 minutes
Serves: 4

1 teaspoon salt
180 g/6½ oz (1¼ cups plus 1 tablespoon)
  coarse rye flour

Pour 1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) water into a large pan, add the salt and bring to the boil. Add the flour a little at a time, whisking briskly. It is extremely important to whisk the flour into the water rather than stirring it, as any lumps that form now will remain in the porridge until you eat it.

When all the flour has been added, simmer, stirring occasionally, until the porridge has thickened and tastes of cooked grains and cereal.

WHEAT SEMOLINA AND MILK PORRIDGE

Semulegrynsgrøt (Norway)
Mannapuuro (Finland)
Mannagrynsgröt (Sweden)

Serve hot with cold milk, top with sugar and ground cassia cinnamon or jam (pages 510–11). Some people also like a dollop of salty butter melting in a mound in the middle of their porridge.

Preparation and cooking time: 15 minutes
Serves: 4

1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) milk
good pinch of salt
8 tablespoons fine semolina

Combine the milk and salt in a pot and bring to the boil over a medium heat. Add the semolina, whisking hard to prevent lumps forming. It is extremely important to whisk the semolina in, rather than stirring it, as any lumps that form now will remain in the porridge until you eat it.

Simmer for about 5 minutes, stirring all the time, until the porridge has thickened.

COLD SEMOLINA AND RED BERRY PORRIDGE

Vispipuuro / Vispgröt (Finland)
Klappgröt / Trollgröt (Sweden)

This children's favourite is most often served as a dessert. I have fond pre-school memories of its fluffy, pink deliciousness. You can prepare it from fresh or frozen berries or cordial. Red berries, like lingonberries or raspberries, are most often used.

If you're using cordial, then make it up with an equal quantity of cordial syrup and water mixed; it should be stronger than if you were going to drink it.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Serves: 6 for dessert

1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) strong cordial
  (made with an equal amount of water)
good pinch of salt
8 tablespoons fine semolina

Fill your sink with a generous amount of ice in cold water.

Combine the cordial and salt in a pot and bring to the boil over a medium heat. Add the semolina, whisking hard to prevent lumps forming. Simmer for about 5 minutes, whisking all the time, until the porridge has thickened.

Transfer the pot to the ice-filled sink and stir until it has cooled down. When the porridge is completely cold, tip into the bowl of a stand mixer and whisk until very fluffy. Serve immediately.

COLD SEMOLINA WITH FRESH BERRIES (VARIATION)

Instead of making the porridge with cordial you can make it with fresh red berries.

Preparation and cooking time: 15 minutes
Serves: 6 for dessert

500 g/1 lb 2 oz red berries
120 g/4 oz (½ cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
a pinch of salt
8 tablespoons fine semolina

Follow the recipe method for cold semolina and red berry porridge (opposite), but in place of the cordial, combine 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) water with the berries, sugar and salt in a large pan. Bring it to the boil over a medium heat, then add the semolina, whisking hard to prevent lumps forming. Simmer for 5 minutes, whisking all the time, until the porridge has thickened.

Transfer the pot to the ice-filled sink and stir until it has cooled down. When the porridge is completely cold, tip into the bowl of a stand mixer and whisk until very fluffy. Serve immediately.

FINNISH POTATO PEARL PORRIDGE

Helmipuuro (Finland)

Helmi is actually the brand under which a particular granulated potato starch is manufactured and sold in Finland. But it is so closely linked to the dish that it has given its name to it. Serve hot with sugar, ground cassia cinnamon and cold milk.

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Serves: 4

800 ml/28 fl oz (3¼ cups) milk
100 g/3½ oz (1 cup) Helmi potato pearls
good pinch of salt
1 tablespoon butter

Pour the milk into a pot and bring to a simmer. Whisk the potato pearls into the hot milk, then add some salt. Simmer for 10 minutes over a medium heat, stirring from time to time. Add the butter, cover the pot and leave it to sit for 5 minutes before serving.

FINNISH OVEN PORRIDGE / OVEN PUDDING

Uunipuuro (Finland)

This oven porridge is essentially a mix of barley and milk, or rice and milk, which is baked for an extended time in the oven so that it reduces down, and some of the starch breaks down into sugars and the mix becomes rather sweet. *Uunipuuro* is served with milk and/or sugar, cassia cinnamon, berries or jam, or Soup of Dried Fruits (page 521). I have also seen recipes that have raisins or whole prunes incorporated into the porridge.

Preparation and cooking time: 1¾ hours
Serves: 4

butter, for greasing
200 g/7 oz (1 cup) pearl barley or
  short-grain rice
1.3 litres/44 fl oz (5¼ cups) milk
1 teaspoon salt

Preheat the oven to 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2 and lightly butter an ovenproof dish.

Mix all of the ingredients together in the prepared dish and cook for 1½ hours.

DANISH BARLEY PORRIDGE WITH APPLE AND RAISINS

Vandgrød (Denmark)

This used to be everyday food served at any time for any meal in simpler homes. I like it for breakfast. Serve it piping hot with cold milk and honey or sugar, to taste.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Serves: 4

200 g/7 oz (1 cup) pearl barley
good pinch of salt
1 handful raisins
2 apples, coarsely chopped or cut into
  wedges, peeled or not, as you prefer

Put the barley and salt in a pot and add 1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) water. Bring to the boil, then simmer over a medium heat for about 5 minutes, stirring continuously. Lower the heat, cover the pan and simmer very gently for 45 minutes, stirring from time to time. Add the raisins and apples during the last 10 minutes of cooking. Adjust the texture if necessary with a little more water if it is too firm for your liking.

NORWEGIAN SOUR CREAM PORRIDGE

Rømmegrøt (Norway)

Rømmegrøt is a wheat flour-based porridge made with a Norwegian sour cream called *rømme*. It is considered a dish for special occasions and is often served with the butterfat that renders out during the cooking process, as well as a sprinkling of sugar and some cinnamon. Traditionally, *rømmegrøt* can also be served with Norwegian cured meats called *spekemat* or with raisins. The best *rømme* is called *seterrømme* and comes from small mountain farms called *seter*.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Serves: 4

500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons)
  rømme
120 g/4 oz (1 cup) plain (all-purpose) flour
500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons)
  full-fat milk
salt, to taste

Put the *rømme* into a pot and bring to the boil over a medium heat, stirring continuously. Lower the heat and simmer for about 5 minutes.

Sift the flour into a bowl and then whisk it straight into the warm sour cream. Whisk vigorously to avoid lumps forming.

Continue to simmer until the fat begins to split and render out of the porridge. Spoon enough of this from the porridge to top with later and set aside.

Add the milk and salt and simmer for about another 10 minutes. Serve immediately, with the rendered butterfat either on top of the porridge in the pan or spooned over each portion on the plate.

NORWEGIAN LAYERED PORRIDGE

Barselsgraut / Fortinnagraut / Onnegraut (Norway)

In historical times, when things like wheat and dairy were scarce and expensive, it was quite common practice in certain parts of Norway to make two porridges for a meal, one cheap like Rye Flour Porridge (page 244) and one expensive like Norwegian Sour Cream Porridge (opposite). The cheap one was spooned into the bottom of a deep serving bowl and subsequently covered with the more expensive one.

NORWEGIAN WHEAT FLOUR AND BUTTER PORRIDGE

Fløyelsgrøt / Smørgröt (Norway)

This is a sort of cheaper, slightly leaner, modern everyday version of *rømmegröt* (opposite). It is most often served with ground cassia cinnamon, sugar and a splash of milk.

Preparation and cooking time: 10 minutes
Serves: 4

1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) milk
1 teaspoon salt
120 g/4 oz (1 cup) plain (all-purpose) flour
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter

Add the milk and salt to a pot and whisk in the flour, making sure there are no lumps. Bring to the boil over a medium heat while stirring constantly so the porridge doesn't set on the bottom of the pot. Reduce the heat to a simmer and cook for 5 minutes. When the porridge has reached the desired texture, add the butter and serve.

MILK PORRIDGE

Melkegrøt (Norway)
Vitgröt (Sweden)

This is essentially a common name for any porridge in which the cereal part is cooked with milk rather than water. Examples of this are Norwegian Wheat Flour and Butter Porridge (left) and Finnish Oven Porridge / Oven Pudding (opposite).

ICELANDIC SKYR AND PORRIDGE MIX

Hræringur (Iceland)

Hræringur is usually a mix of hot or cold porridge made from rolled oats (page 242) and Skyr (page 536), but can also contain other sources of starch, like barley, rice or rye, or some Icelandic moss (page 549).

It is commonly served with milk and/or Icelandic liver sausage or Icelandic blood sausage.

Preparation and cooking time: 5 minutes

equal amounts hot or cold porridge, made
  from rolled oats, barley or rice, and Skyr
  (page 536)

Mix the porridge and skyr together.

PAJALA PORRIDGE

Pajalagröt (Sweden)

A porridge is especially good for your stomach; I doubt you will find many other foodstuffs with the same amount of dietary fibre in them. Pajala is a small town in the very north of Sweden, just on the border with Finland.

Serve *pajalagröt* hot, with cold milk.

Preparation and cooking time: 15 minutes
Soaking time: overnight
Serves: 4

30 g/1 oz (3 tablespoons) linseeds (flaxseeds)
35 g/1¼ oz (¼ cup) raisins
10 dried apricots
10 pitted prunes
20 g/¾ oz (2 tablespoons) rye bran
1 teaspoon salt
100 g/3½ oz (1 cup) rolled oats

Combine all the ingredients, except for the oats in a large mixing bowl. Pour in about 700 ml/24 fl oz (3 cups) cold water and leave in the refrigerator overnight to soak.

The next day, transfer the mixture to a pot. Add the oats and bring to the boil over a medium heat. Simmer for 5 minutes, stirring from time to time. If the porridge is very thick, adjust the consistency with a bit more water.

RYE SOURDOUGH, POTATO AND PEA SOUP FROM VIROLAHTI

Hapanvelli (Finland)

Serve this thick South Eastern Finnish soup with a knob of butter and some cold milk.

You will need to soak the split peas in plenty of water overnight before preparing the soup.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Soaking time: overnight
Serves: 4

130 g/4½ oz (⅔ cup) dried yellow split peas, soaked overnight
300 g/11 oz potatoes, peeled and coarsely chopped into small pieces
300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) rye Sourdough Starter made with rye (page 540)
pinch of salt

Drain the split peas and place them in a pot with 800 ml/28 fl oz (3¼ cups) water. Bring to the boil over medium heat. Lower the heat and simmer for 10 minutes.

Add the potatoes to the pot and continue to cook, stirring frequently, to stop them sticking to the bottom of the pan and burning.

When the potatoes are almost done, after about 20 minutes, add the sourdough starter and simmer for another 30 minutes, stirring from time to time. Season with salt before serving.

DANISH RYE BREAD AND BEER SOUP

Øllebrød (Denmark)

This sweet and malty soup is one of the most iconic Danish dishes. Traditional recipes are often seasoned with citrus fruits like lemon or orange and it is often served with some cold milk or a dollop of whipped cream. *Øllebrød* is made from dried scraps of dried Danish Rye Bread (page 128) and Hvidtøl beer. Almost all of the more recent recipes I have read state that bread without rye kernels should be used, and some even say that the finished soup should be passed through a sieve (strainer) to make it very smooth. Older recipes seem to make less fuss of which type of Danish rye bread is used and how smooth and velvety the end result really is. I imagine this is because this is a recipe that developed from necessity, as a cunning way of using bread scraps, because you had to, into something that people do today because they like it. *Øllebrød* is also available in instant-mix preparations.

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Soaking time: 10 minutes
Serves: 4

350 g/12 oz Danish Rye Bread (page 128) scraps, cut into 1 cm/½ inch dice and dried
1 strip orange or lemon rind
2 bottles, about 660 ml/22½ fl oz (2⅔ cups) hvidtøl beer
1 cassia cinnamon stick
juice of ½ orange or ¼ lemon
80 g/3 oz (¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar

Pulace the dried bread and the citrus rind in a pot and pour in the beer and 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) water. Leave to soak for 10 minutes, then bring to a simmer over a medium heat. Stir regularly with a whisk to gradually break down the structure of the bread during the cooking process. Cook for about 10 minutes, then add the citrus juice and the sugar. Whisk the *øllebrød* until smooth and shiny before serving.

SWEDISH BEER SOUP

Ölsupa (Sweden)

This was historically (up until a hundred years ago) a very common food, not only in Sweden but in other parts of the Nordic region too. Today not so much. I think it is a bit of a pity. I kind of like this soup; it is sweet and rich, but strangely balanced by the bitterness in the beer.

In a more fancy setting, beer soup would be further enriched by adding egg yolks to the hot soup just before serving. If you do so, add 4 yolks to the recipe, but remember that you can't reheat it again after the eggs have gone in.

Preparation and cooking time: 15–20 minutes
Serves: 4

500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) milk
2 tablespoons plain (all-purpose) flour
1 teaspoon ground ginger
200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) *Svagdricka* (sweet small beer)
1 tablespoon golden syrup
good pinch of salt
4 egg yolks (optional)

Whisk the milk, flour and ginger in a pot. Bring to the boil, continuing to whisk. Simmer for a few minutes, then add the remaining ingredients. Simmer for a few more minutes, whisking all the time. The soup is done when it no longer tastes of raw starch. Take off the heat, add the egg yolks, if using, and stir briefly with a whisk until fully incorporated. Serve the soup frothing and piping hot.

FINNISH BEER SOUP

Kaljakeitto (Finland)

Serve *kaljakeitto* hot with some croutons sprinkled on top.

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Serves: 4

750 ml/25 fl oz (3 cups) milk
3 tablespoons plain (all-purpose) flour
750 ml/25 fl oz (3 cups) *kotikalja* beer
4 tablespoons brown sugar
½ teaspoon ground ginger
1 cassia cinnamon stick and/or a few cloves (optional)
salt, to taste

Mix the milk and the flour in a large pan and bring to a simmer over a medium heat. Stir continuously to avoid lumps forming or the mixture sticking to the bottom of the pan.

In a pot, mix the beer with the sugar and spices and bring to the boil. Carefully pour the boiling mixture through a sieve (strainer) straight onto the thickened milk. Stir to combine, add a little salt and serve immediately.

RICE GRAIN SOUP

Risgrynsvälling (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Serves: 4

90 g/3¼ oz (½ cup) short-grain rice
1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) milk
1 cassia cinnamon stick
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon sugar

Mix all the ingredients together in a pot with 200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) water. Bring to the boil over a medium heat. Lower the heat and simmer for 45 minutes, stirring now and then.

ROLLED OAT GRAIN SOUP

Havregrynsvälling (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 4 big cups

45 g/1¾ oz (½ cup) rolled oats
1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) milk
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons sugar
3 tablespoons raisins (optional)

Mix 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) water and the rolled oats together in a large pot. Bring to the boil over a medium heat, then lower the heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Add the milk, salt and sugar and simmer for another 15 minutes until thickened. Remove from the heat and add the raisins, if using, before serving.

VELVET GRAIN SOUP

Sammetsvälling / Vetemjölsvälling (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 15 minutes
Serves: 4

4 tablespoons plain (all-purpose) flour
1.2 litres/40 fl oz (5 cups) milk
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon sugar, plus extra to serve
1 tablespoon butter
3 tablespoons raisins (optional)

Mix the flour with some of the milk in a bowl until smooth with no lumps.

Bring the rest of the milk and the salt to the boil in a large pot over a medium heat. Add the milk and flour mixture, little by little, whisking all the time. Lower the heat and simmer for 5 minutes, whisking constantly so that the milk does not burn. Add the sugar and butter and serve with raisins, if using, and some extra sugar on top.

SEMOLINA GRAIN SOUP

Mannagrynsvälling (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 10 minutes
Serves: 4

1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) milk
1 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons fine semolina
3 tablespoons raisins (optional)

Bring the milk and salt to the boil in a large pot over a medium heat and whisk in the semolina. Lower the heat and simmer for 5 minutes. If you want to use raisins, add them after the semolina.

SWEET-AND-SOUR PRUNE AND RICE SOUP FROM TRONDHEIM

Trondheimssuppe (Norway)

Serve hot with a dollop of whipped cream or *rømme* (Norwegian sour cream).

Make up the cordial to taste, as if you were going to drink it.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Serves: 4

50 g/2 oz (¼ cup) white short-grain rice
1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) raspberry Cordial (pages 512–3)
20 g/¾ oz (2 tablespoons) plain (all-purpose) flour
200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) milk
pinch of salt
1 handful pitted prunes or raisins

Combine the rice and cordial in a pot and bring to the boil over a medium heat. Simmer for about 15 minutes, stirring frequently to prevent it sticking to the bottom of the pot.

In a separate bowl, mix the flour and milk, then add this to the simmering sweet soup. Simmer for another 15 minutes, stirring from time to time, then season with salt. Stir in the prunes or raisins just before serving.

SWEET PASTRIES LEAVENED WITH YEAST

Previous page: *Ripe wheat, Skåne, Sweden 2017.*

Prepare for an uncharacteristic little rant. You can skip it if you are not into that kind of stuff and find some more general wheat info at the bottom of page 257.

As I sat there in a Stockholm café, which can't be described as anything but hipster (make of that what you want), I thought to myself that if I ever have to eat another wholewheat sourdough slow-leavened cinnamon bun again I might snap and, if nothing else, at least get a little bit verbally abusive towards some innocent bystander.

In the process of writing this book I have eaten a lot of bread and a lot of buns. I have been to numerous cafés, both classic and modern, and I have thought a lot about what's good and what's not. I have also thought a lot about the development in the world of food, especially when it comes to baked goods. There has been a sentiment for the last ten years or so in food (generally speaking) where small producers are always considered better than large ones and where complicated and new is the only way to go. There seems to be no room for the middle ground and some ways of doing things have been considered the best way, when for the most part many different ways of doing something are not really better than each other, just different.

The sourdough bun exemplifies this development. There has been a revolution in bread where many more ambitious bakeries are now making artisanal bread, often from less processed flour. This is good. It is often made from sourdough; this is also good if that's the kind of bread you are looking for.

Any revolution is fuelled by a passion to change and the sentiment is often that the new thing everyone is doing is in any regard better than whatever was there before. This is where the problem with buns starts.

I love buns, and I love a great hand-kneaded, stone-oven baked wholegrain sourdough loaf too. But they are different things, and what increases the greatness of one cannot necessarily always be said to do the same to the other. I actually want my bun to be made from white processed flour because I want it to taste more from the baking process and from the filling than from the minerality of the grain itself. I also want my bun to be made with added yeast and not sourdough because it promotes a fast-leavening process, which in turn leaves a lot of primary sweetness left in the flour itself. The inherent sweetness of processed flour is what gives that mild wheatiness, which acts as such an amazing foundation for the aroma of sweet spices like cinnamon and cardamom to shine on. This is the same sweetness that in a slow-leavening process with sourdough is converted by bacteria into the acidity we all love in sourdough breads.

Because you remove that natural sweetness in sourdough buns during the fermentation process, the dough never gets a chance to taste nicely of, for example, the cardamom (sweetness is to sweet spices what salt is to savoury food, an enhancer of flavour) that's been added to it. This leads to people adding too much of the spice as they try to make it taste right. This often results in bitterness and poor texture.

Because the bun gets more acidic with sourdough, people tend to increase the amount of sweet filling to create balance. Going from the very light smear of a traditional bun to significantly more just results in the sourdough bun tasting of what it actually is – a piece of sourdough bread soaked in cloyingly large amounts of sugar, butter and seasoning.

Sourdough buns scream at you through a mess of acidity, wholegrain flavour, too much filling and added sugar about how poor a fit this technique is for them. Traditional yeast-leavened buns whisper to you in perfect harmony through delicate curtains of soft wheatiness, sweet spice and just a little bit of filling with a hint of butteriness, about how delicious they are. This is all thanks to a perfect balance and not because you add as much as possible of everything separately delicious into one thing. Also, great buns never leave your fingers sticky after you have finished.

Wheat is by far the most versatile of all the grains grown for baking, simply because the flour milled from it can be so varied. It can range from wholegrain flour full of cereal 'mineraliness' and character, to highly refined and mild and sweet tasting. It can also range from low in gluten (soft), lending itself perfectly to all kinds of things in which you want a short and crumbly texture, to very high (hard), which means that it is great for crusty yeast-leavened breads and supple bun dough that require stretchy texture to produce a fluffy crumb.

SWEET WHEAT BUNS

Vetedeg (Sweden)

The first of the three following recipes is probably the most common recipe used for cinnamon buns in Scandinavia – it is the one that has been on the back of the wheat flour packets since forever. But slowly this version is losing ground to newer recipes, which are mostly a bit richer.

The second recipe is a bit richer than the classic recipe above. My wife Tove uses it, and I am a bit unclear on exactly where it came from originally. Tove is very good at baking; she has a natural feel for it, and most of her recipes have evolved from classics to emphasize the particular characteristics that she likes (and that I do too, for that matter).

The third recipe is the richest most briochey, buttery sweet recipe for buns that I know of. It's by no means classic, but it is truly delicious. Like many other recipes that have been updated and made even more delicious in the last ten years, this recipe was put together by Swedish baker Leila Lindholm. I have changed the last recipe a little by increasing the size of the batch to roughly fit the other two basic recipes, meaning that they can be interchanged throughout the book.

SWEET WHEAT BUN DOUGH 1, BASIC RECIPE

Vetedeg, basrecept (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Rising time: 30–40 minutes
Makes: enough dough for 30–40 buns

150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons) butter
500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) milk
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
1 teaspoon salt
90 g/3¼ oz (½ cup) sugar
2 teaspoons finely ground cardamom seeds (optional)
800 g/1¾ lb (5¾ cups) strong wheat flour

Melt the butter in a pan, add the milk and heat to body temperature (37°C/98.6°F). Dissolve the yeast in the milk and butter mixture in the bowl of a stand mixer. Add the salt, sugar, cardamom, if using, and then the flour, little by little, while you knead the dough with the dough hook. Set aside a little of the flour for dusting later. Keep kneading for about 10 minutes, or until it comes clean off the sides of the bowl. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30–40 minutes, or until doubled in size.

SWEET WHEAT BUN DOUGH 2, TOVE'S RECIPE

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Rising time: 30–40 minutes
Makes: enough dough for 30–40 buns

320 ml/11 fl oz (1¼ cups plus 1 tablespoon) milk
150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons) butter
1 tablespoon finely ground cardamom seeds (optional)
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
1 egg
125 g/4½ oz (½ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
1 teaspoon salt
750 g/1 lb 10 oz (5½ cups) strong wheat flour, plus extra for dusting

Combine the milk, butter and any spices (if using) in a small pan and heat until the butter has melted. Leave to cool down to just above room temperature and dissolve the yeast into the milk.

Transfer the mix to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook, add the egg, sugar, salt and flour and knead for about 10 minutes or until very smooth, shiny and elastic. The dough should come clean off the sides of the bowl. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30–40 minutes, or until doubled in size.

SWEET WHEAT BUN DOUGH 3, LEILA'S RECIPE

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: enough dough for 30–40 buns

200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) milk
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
1 tablespoon finely ground cardamom seeds
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) cream
125 g/4½ oz (1 cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
½ teaspoon salt
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, soft
1 egg
715 g/1 lb 9 oz (6 cups) strong wheat flour

In a pan, heat the milk to body temperature (37°C/98.6°F). Combine the milk and yeast in the bowl of a stand mixer and stir until completely dissolved. Add any spices you are using, the cream, sugar, salt, butter and egg. Add the flour and knead with the dough hook until the dough starts coming clean off the sides of the bowl. This recipe benefits from a lot of gluten development and it can take up to 20 minutes to knead the dough. It should be shiny and very elastic when done. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise until doubled in size before proceeding to use it in any of the following recipes. With the first two sweet wheat bun dough recipes the dough should take 30–40 minutes to double in size, but this third method will take up to an hour as it is a bit richer and leavens more slowly.

SHAPES OF BUNS

There are many ways of shaping buns with various fillings. Any of the bun recipes in this chapter that are based on any of the three basic sweet wheat bun dough recipes will work with any of the shapes illustrated on pages 260–62.

VÄSTGÖTAWIENERBRÖD

This shape is unusual and it translates to Danish pastry from the southern Swedish region of Västra Götaland. It has nothing to do with a Danish though, so I imagine that this little braid takes its name from its resemblance to a Danish.

For image see page 271

WREATHS AND BRAIDS

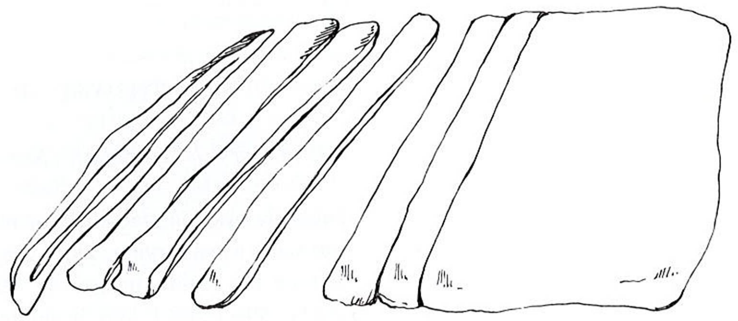
Vetekransar och Vetelängder (Sweden)

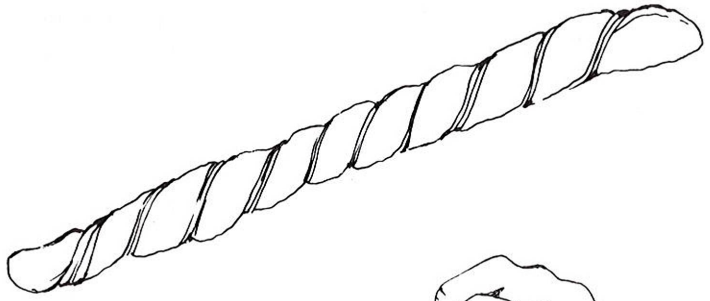
These are essentially really large buns that you cut into slices when serving. There are several ways of shaping the braids themselves, while the ends of any narrower and longer braid can be joined together before leavening for the final time, thereby making a wreath. Cinnamon Buns (pages 264–5), Cardamom Buns (page 272) and Almond Buns (page 268) are all commonly baked as braids and wreaths at home. In bakeries it's also common to see additions of either pastry cream (page 533) and or some kind of jam (pages 510–11), such as blueberry. These are most commonly spooned along the middle of the finished but not yet leavened braid or wreath.

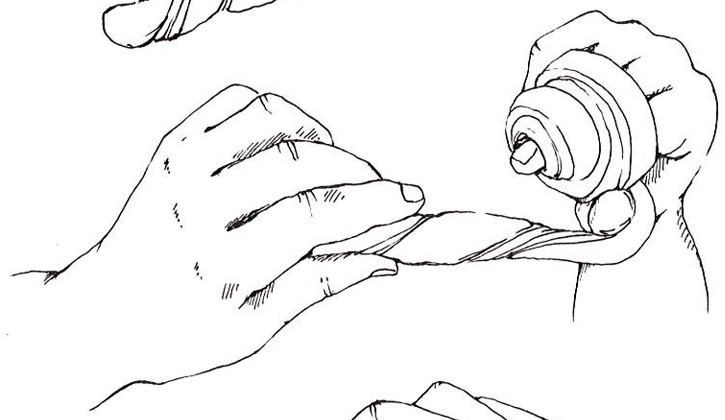
The recipes in this book (both basic recipes and fillings) would make two braids or wreaths. The cooking time should be increased a little from the individual bun recipes to 15 or 20 minutes at 200°C/400°C/Gas Mark 6. The illustrations on pages 262–3 show the shaping instructions for cut roll braids and filled braids. Follow whichever recipe you have chosen for the specific leavening instructions.

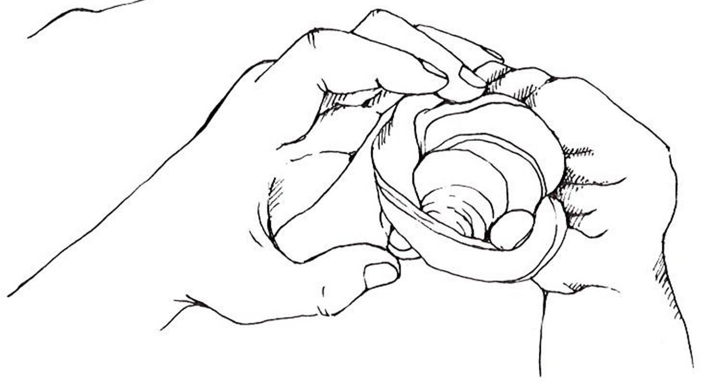
THE KNOT

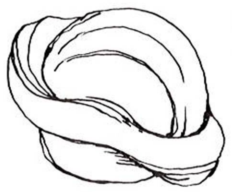
This shape is quick to make and gives a neat and tidy-looking bun. Roll the dough out into a rectangle of 40 x 60 cm/15½ x 23½ inches. Spread half of it (40 x 30 cm/15½ x 12 inches) with your chosen filling. Fold the other half of the dough over the filling. Place the seam towards you. With a sharp knife, cut ribbons 30 cm/12 inches long and 1.5 cm/¾ inch wide. Pick a ribbon up and twist it a few laps. Hold the end between your index and middle finder and roll the ribbon around the finger – imagine that you are making a ball of yarn, but instead it's a ball of dough. It's fine to stretch the dough a little so that the ball is really quite tight. When you are running out of ribbon, you pull the ball off your two fingers and tuck the end of the ribbon into that hole after having pulled it one lap around the ball. This is to secure the dough in place.





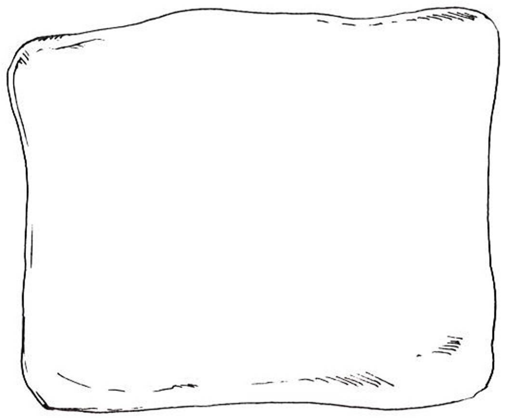


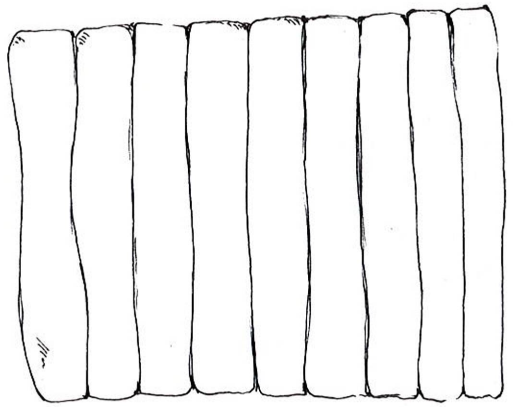


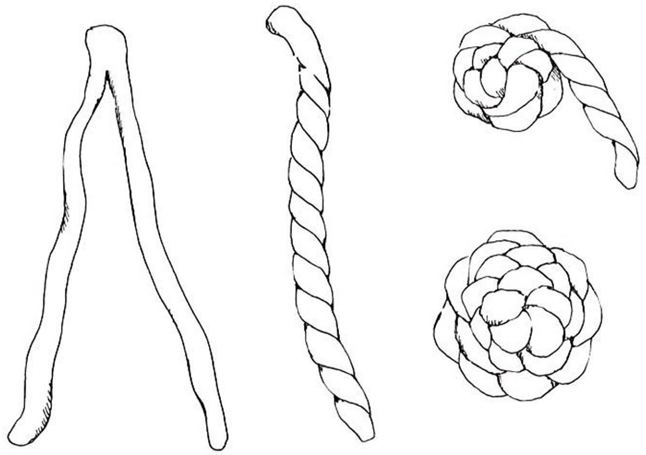


THE TWISTED KNOT

This is the classic shape of a Cardamom Bun (page 272). Roll the dough out into a rectangle of 40 x 60 cm/15½ x 23½ inches. Spread half of it (20 x 60 cm/8 x 23½ inches) with your chosen filling. Fold the other half of the dough over the filling. Place the seam towards you. With a sharp knife, cut ribbons 20 cm/8 inches long and 3 cm/1 inch wide. In the middle of each ribbon, make a lengthwise cut almost to the end. It will look like a pair of legs. Pick up a pair of 'legs' using your thumb and index finger and twist them into a spiral using your other hand. Keep twisting the pair of 'legs' as you start twisting it also around the tips of your index finger and thumb holding the other end. It should twist into a knot. When you start to run out of ribbon, let go of the end inside the knot and tuck the other end under the bun and place on a baking sheet.

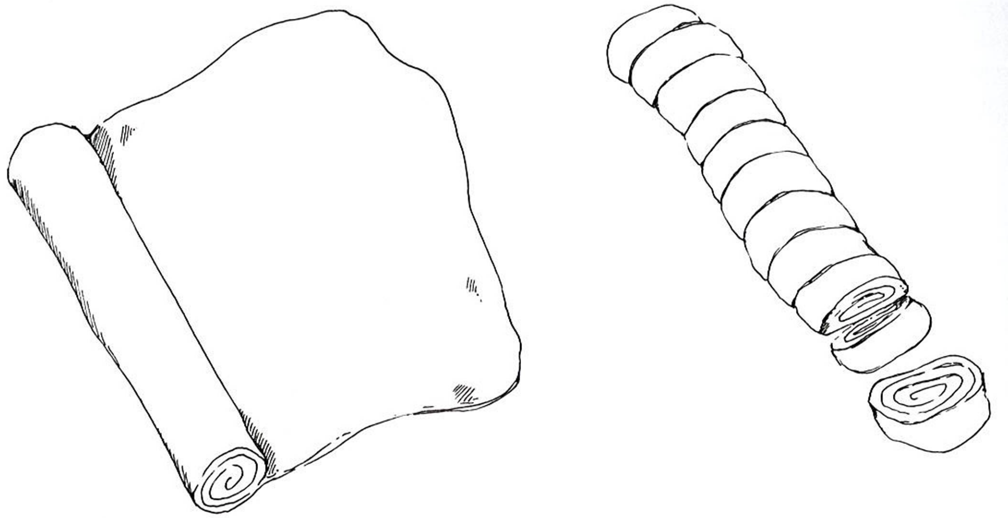






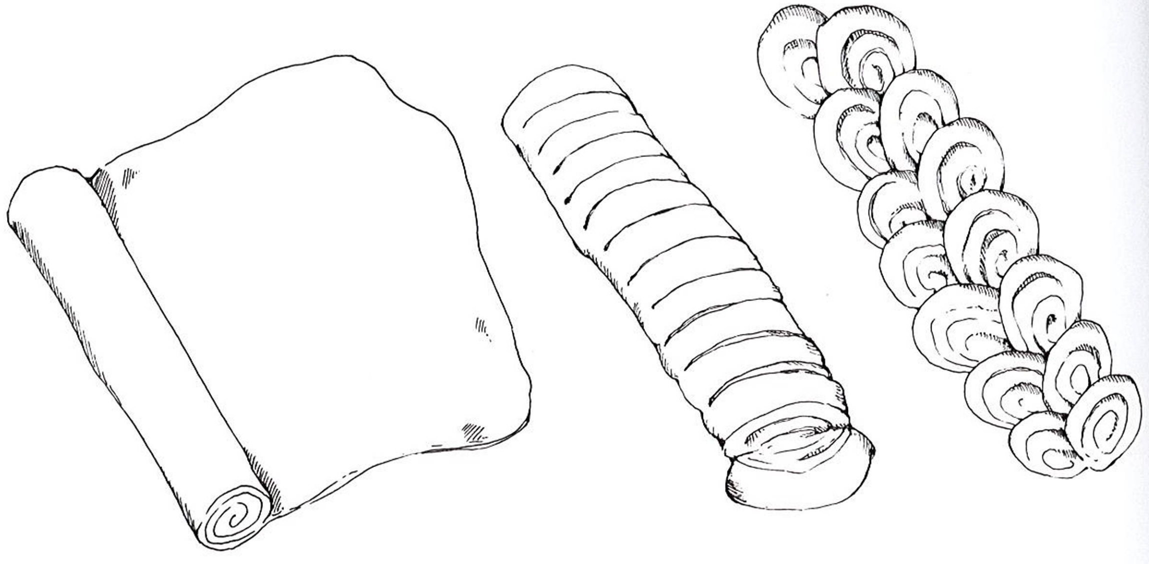
THE CUT ROLL / SNAIL

This is the classic shape for the traditional Cinnamon Buns (page 264–5). Roll the dough, spread with any filling, up into a tight log, starting at the long edge closest to you and working away. Finish so that the unbuttered edge is underneath. With a very sharp knife, cut the log into slices. Transfer the slices to a baking sheet lined with baking (parchment) paper.



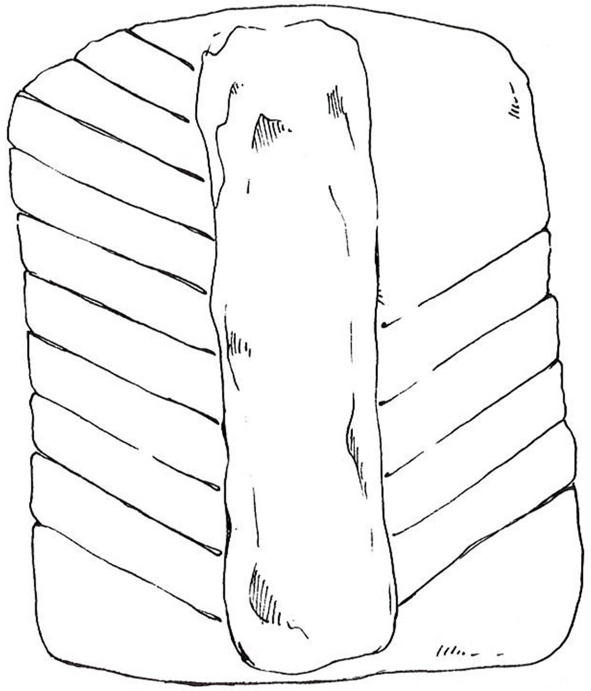
THE CUT ROLL BRAID

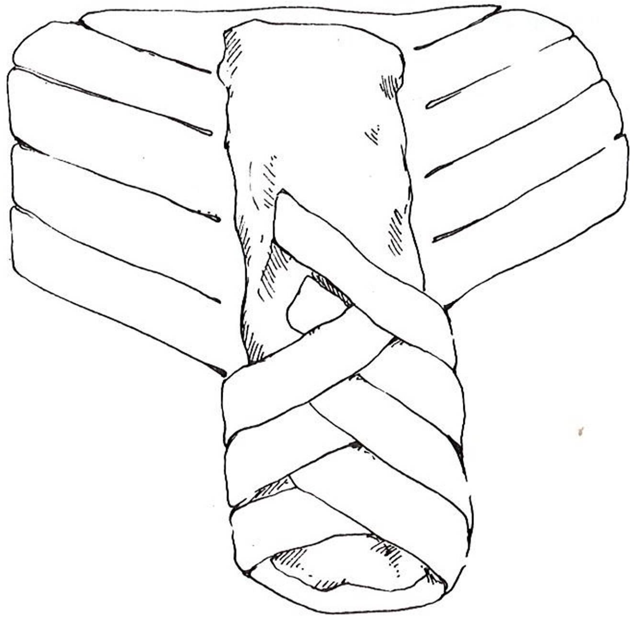
The recipes in this book (both basic recipes and fillings) will make two braids or wreaths. The cooking time should be increased a little from the individual bun recipes to 15–20 minutes at 200°C/400°C/Gas Mark 6. If you only want to make one braid, just use a half quantity of dough and filling. Roll the dough, spread with any filling, up into a tight log, starting at the long edge closest to you and working away. Finish so that the unbuttered edge is underneath. With a very sharp knife, cut the log into slices but don't cut all the way through so the slices are still attached at the bottom. Pull each slice a little outwards from the roll – pulling every other one to the left and the others to the right. Transfer the braid to a baking sheet lined with baking (parchment) paper using a large offset spatula.



THE FILLED BRAID

The recipes in this book (both basic recipes and fillings) will make two braids or wreaths. The cooking time should be increased a little from the individual bun recipes to 15 or 20 minutes at 200°C/400°C/Gas Mark 6. If you only want to make one braid, just use a half quantity of dough and filling. Roll the dough out into a rectangle 40 x 30 cm/15½ x 12 inches. Spread the filling on the middle third of the rectangle. With a shape knife, cut according to the illustration below and braid the cut ribbons to cover the filling. Transfer the braid to a baking sheet lined with baking (parchment) paper using a large offset spatula.





PLAIN SWEET WHEAT BUNS

Släta bullar (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 30 buns

1 quantity any one of the three basic
  Sweet Wheat Bun Doughs (pages 258–9),
  flavoured with cardamom
plain (all-purpose) flour, for dusting
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)

Follow the instructions for one of the sweet wheat bun doughs on pages 258–9, making sure to include the cardamom when making the dough.

After the dough has risen (for the first time), line several baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and knead it for a few minutes. Divide the dough into 30 equal pieces and shape into round buns. Put the buns on the prepared baking sheets, cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes, or until they are doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Brush the buns with the egg wash and bake for 8–10 minutes. Leave to cool on wire racks.

For image see page 267

CINNAMON BUNS

Snúður (Iceland)
Kanelsnurr / Skillingsboller (Norway)
Korvapuustit (Finland)
Kanelsnegl (Denmark)
Kanelbullar (Sweden)

These are sticky cinnamon buns, plain and simple. Enjoy them with a big glass of cold milk or a cup of coffee.

In Sweden, cinnamon buns are often sprinkled with some pearl sugar before being baked, and in Norway and Denmark they are often decorated with icing – white or chocolate (page 530) – after they have cooled down.

I think it is really important to bake these buns in little individual paper cases, otherwise the filling has a tendency to leak out onto the baking sheet and burn, instead of soaking into the bun itself.

If you have any leftovers, cut them in half and turn them into rusks according to the instructions on pages 194–5.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Makes: 20 buns

1 quantity any one of the three basic
  Sweet Wheat Bun Doughs (pages 258–9),
  flavoured with cardamom
plain (all-purpose) flour, for dusting
Egg Wash (pages 73–74)

For the filling
200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) very soft butter
2 tablespoons ground cassia cinnamon
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar

To decorate
pearl sugar (optional)
White Icing or Chocolate Icing (page 530),
  (optional)

Follow the instructions for one of the sweet wheat bun doughs, flavoured with cardamom on pages 258–9. After the dough has been left to rise, roll it out on a lightly floured work counter to 60 x 40 cm/24 x 16 inches.

Use an offset spatula to spread on an even layer of the very soft butter. Leave a 4 cm/1½ inch clear border along the long edge that is furthest away from you. Sprinkle the cinnamon and sugar all over the butter. Roll the dough up into a tight log, starting at the long edge closest to you and working away. Finish so that the unbuttered edge is underneath.

With a very sharp knife, cut the log into 20 slices. Lift each slice into a paper case and transfer to baking sheets. Cover the buns with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for about 25 minutes, or until they are doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6.

Brush the buns very lightly with the egg wash and sprinkle with pearl sugar, if using. Bake them for 10–12 minutes, or until golden, then remove from the oven and cool on wire racks. (Sneak a bun just for yourself, as soon as they are cool enough to handle.) Once the buns are completely cold, decorate with icing, if using.

For image see page 267

CINNAMON BUN CAKE

Butterkaka (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 2 cakes or 1 cake and some
  cinnamon buns

1 quantity any one of the three basic Sweet
  Wheat Bun Doughs (pages 258–9),
  flavoured with cardamom
plain (all-purpose) flour, for dusting
90 g/3¼ oz (½ cup) sugar, for brushing

For the filling
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, at room
  temperature, plus extra to grease
90 g/3¼ oz (½ cup) sugar
1½ tablespoons ground cinnamon

For the vanilla pastry cream
2 egg yolks
2 tablespoons sugar
2 tablespoons cornflour (cornstarch)
200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) milk
20 g/¾ oz (1⅓ tablespoons) butter
1 vanilla bean, split open

Follow the instructions for one of the sweet wheat bun doughs, flavoured with cardamom on pages 258–9. This recipe is enough to make 2 cinnamon bun cakes, so halve the quantities if you want to make just one.

While the dough is rising, make the filling by mixing the butter, sugar and cinnamon in a bowl.

For the vanilla pastry cream, add all the ingredients to a pot. Scrape the vanilla seeds out of the bean, then let the seeds and the whole bean simmer with the rest of the ingredients over a low heat while you stir constantly until the cream thickens.

Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan. Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and knead it for a minute. Roll the dough out and make the buns according to the recipe for cinnamon buns opposite.

Put the buns into the prepared cake pan, but don't place them too close to one another as they will rise one more time before baking. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30–45 minutes. The buns should be stuck together after the second rise.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Make a hollow in each cinnamon bun and add a scoop of the vanilla pastry cream. Bake for 30–35 minutes.

Meanwhile, bring the sugar and 100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) water to the boil in a pan so that the sugar dissolves. Brush the cake with the mixture as soon as you remove it from the oven, but avoid brushing the mix on the vanilla pastry cream. Loosen the edges from the cake pan and leave to cool.

For image see page 267

FAROESE CINNAMON BUNS

Sniglar (Faroe Islands)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 20 buns

100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter
150 g/5 oz (¾ cup) sugar
2 eggs
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (4 cups plus 2 tablespoons) weak (soft) wheat flour
4 teaspoons baking powder
150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) milk
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)

For the filling
200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) very soft butter
2 tablespoons ground cassia cinnamon
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar

Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4.

Combine the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat together until pale. Add the eggs, one at a time, making sure each is fully incorporated before you add the next. Sift in the flour and baking powder and mix together at medium speed. With the motor running, pour in the milk, a little at a time.

Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and roll it out to a rectagle of 60 x 40 cm/24 x 16 inches. Use an offset spatula to spread on an even layer of the very soft butter. Leave a 4 cm/1½ inch clear border along the long edge that is furthest away from you. Sprinkle the cinnamon and sugar all over the butter. Roll the dough up into a tight log, starting at the long edge closest to you and working away. Finish so that the unbuttered edge is underneath.

With a very sharp knife, cut the log into 20 slices. Lift each slice into a paper case and transfer to baking sheets.

Brush the buns very lightly with the egg wash. Bake for 8–10 minutes, or until a light golden brown, then remove from the oven and cool on wire racks before eating.

VANILLA CREAM BUNS

Vaniljbullar / Krämbullar (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 25–30 buns

1 quantity any one of the three basic Sweet Wheat Bun Doughs (pages 258–9), flavoured with cardamom
1 quantity Vanilla Custard/Pastry Cream (page 533)
plain (all-purpose) flour, for dusting

For the topping
75 g/2¾ oz (5 tablespoons) butter, melted
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar

Follow the instructions for one of the sweet wheat bun doughs on pages 258–9. While the dough is rising, follow the instructions for the vanilla pastry cream on page 533.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and knead it for a minute. Divide it into 25–30 equal pieces and shape each piece into a round bun. Roll out each bun and place a good scoop of the vanilla pastry cream in the middle. Fold the edges over the cream and pinch them together to seal.

Put the buns on the prepared baking sheets, making sure to place them pinched-side down. Cover the buns with clean dish towels and leave to rise for 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Meanwhile preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Bake the buns for about 10 minutes, or until golden. Remove them from the oven and leave them to cool a little before brushing them with the melted butter and rolling them in the sugar.

For image see page opposite

Clockwise from top left: Plain Sweet Wheat Buns (page 264); Cinnamon Bun Cake (page 265); Cinnamon Bun Braid (page 264); Cardamom Bun Knots (page 272); Vanilla Cream Buns (page 266); Cinnamon Buns (page 264)

OPEN VANILLA CREAM BUNS / SUN BUNS

Vaniljbullar / Solbullar (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 25–30 buns

1 quantity any one of the three basic Sweet Wheat Bun Doughs (pages 258–9)
1 quantity Vanilla Custard/Pastry Cream (page 533)
plain (all-purpose) flour, for dusting

For the topping
75 g/2¾ oz (5 tablespoons) butter, melted
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar

Follow the instructions for one of the sweet wheat bun doughs on pages 258–9. While the dough is rising, make the vanilla custard / pastry cream by following the instructions on page 533.

Line several baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and knead it for a minute. Divide it into 25–30 equal pieces and shape them into buns. Put them on the prepared baking sheets, cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6.

Spoon the vanilla pastry cream into a piping (pastry) bag fitted with a nozzle, put the nozzle in the middle of each bun and fill it with the pastry cream. There should still be edges of the dough around the pastry cream.

Bake the buns for 8–10 minutes, or until golden. Remove them from the oven and leave them to cool a little before brushing them with the melted butter and rolling them in the sugar, making sure that the sugar does not cover the pastry cream.

For image see page 271

ALMOND BUNS

Mandelbullar (Sweden)

I love these buns, as they contain some almond paste in the filling, and they are obviously as tasty as any bun when fresh from the oven, but they also keep a little bit longer. You can egg wash them before baking if you want them to be shiny. Personally, I prefer to skip that and simply brush them with a little bit of soft butter when they are really hot, straight from the oven.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Makes: 20 buns

1 quantity any one of the three basic Sweet Wheat Bun Doughs (pages 258–9)
1 quantity White Sugar Pastry Filling (page 530)

Follow the instructions for cinnamon buns on pages 264–5 but substitute that filling for the white sugar pastry filling on page 530.

SWEET LEAVENED WHEAT DOUGH CRESCENTS WITH CINNAMON FILLING

Gifflar med kanel (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 32 crescents

1 quantity any one of the three basic Sweet Wheat Bun Doughs (pages 258–9)
plain (all-purpose) flour, for dusting
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)
pearl sugar (optional)

For the filling
200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) very soft butter
2 tablespoons ground cassia cinnamon
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar

Follow the instructions for one of the sweet wheat bun doughs on pages 258–9.

Line several baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and knead it for a minute. Divide the dough into 4 equal pieces and roll each piece out to the shape of a circle. Use an offset spatula to spread an even layer of the very soft butter on each circle. Leave a 2 cm/¾ inch clear border along the long edge that is furthest away from you. Sprinkle the cinnamon and sugar all over the butter. Cut each circle into 8 triangles then roll them up, starting from the base of the triangle. Place the crescents on the prepared baking sheets, cover with clean dish towels and leave to rise for about 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Brush the crescents with the egg wash and sprinkle some pearl sugar on top, if you want to. Bake for 8–10 minutes, then remove from the oven and leave to cool on wire racks.

SWEET LEAVENED WHEAT DOUGH CRESCENTS WITH HAZELNUT FILLING

Gifflar med hasselnötter (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 32 crescents

1 quantity any one of the three basic Sweet Wheat Bun Doughs (pages 258–9)
plain (all-purpose) flour, for dusting
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)
pearl sugar, to taste (optional)

For the filling
100 g/3½ oz (¾ cup) hazelnuts
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter, at room temperature

Follow the instructions for one of the sweet wheat bun doughs on pages 258–9. While the dough is rising (for the first time), make the filling by grinding the hazelnuts and mixing them with the sugar and butter in a bowl.

Line several baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and knead it for a minute. Divide the dough into 4 equal pieces and roll each piece out to the shape of a circle. Cut each circle into 8 triangles and put a spoonful of filling on each triangle. Then roll them up, starting from the base of the triangle. Place the crescents on the prepared baking sheets, cover with clean dish towels and leave to rise for about 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Brush the crescents with the egg wash and sprinkle some pearl sugar on top, if you want to. Bake for 8–10 minutes, then remove from the oven and leave to cool on wire racks.

For image see page 271

ALMOND AND TOFFEE BUNS / TOSCA BUNS

Toscabullar (Sweden)

There is something about getting the toffee-covered tops of these perfectly caramelized; it's same as with the Tosca Cake (page 410). I fail each time, ending up with a pale centre and almost burnt edges. My grandmother though – and every other grandmother I have ever seen making them – seems to nail it every time. I wonder if it's one of those skills that just comes to you automatically when you have your first grandchild.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Makes: 20 buns

1 quantity any one of the three basic Sweet Wheat Bun Doughs (pages 258–9)
1 quantity White Sugar Pastry Filling (page 530)

For the toffee and almond topping
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter
85 g/3 oz (½ cup) sugar
2 tablespoons golden syrup
2 tablespoons plain (all-purpose) flour
2 tablespoons milk
100 g/3½ oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons) flaked almonds

Follow the instructions for cinnamon buns on pages 264–5 but substitute that filling for the white sugar pastry filling on page 530.

When you place the sliced buns on the baking sheets to rise, make the topping and preheat the oven to 220°C/425°C/Gas Mark 7. Place all of the ingredients for the topping, except the flaked almonds, in a small pot and bring to a simmer over a medium heat while stirring constantly with a whisk. Simmer for 2–3 minutes. Add the almonds and stir them in carefully using a spoon; don't break them up too much. Divide the topping over the now risen buns and bake for 8 minutes, or until the topping is perfectly evenly caramelized. Leave to cool on the baking sheets.

For image see page opposite

APPLE COMPOTE BUNS

Äppelbullar (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 25–30 buns

1 quantity any one of the three basic Sweet Wheat Bun Doughs (pages 258–9) flavoured with cardamom
plain (all-purpose) four, for dusting
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)
pearl sugar, to sprinkle

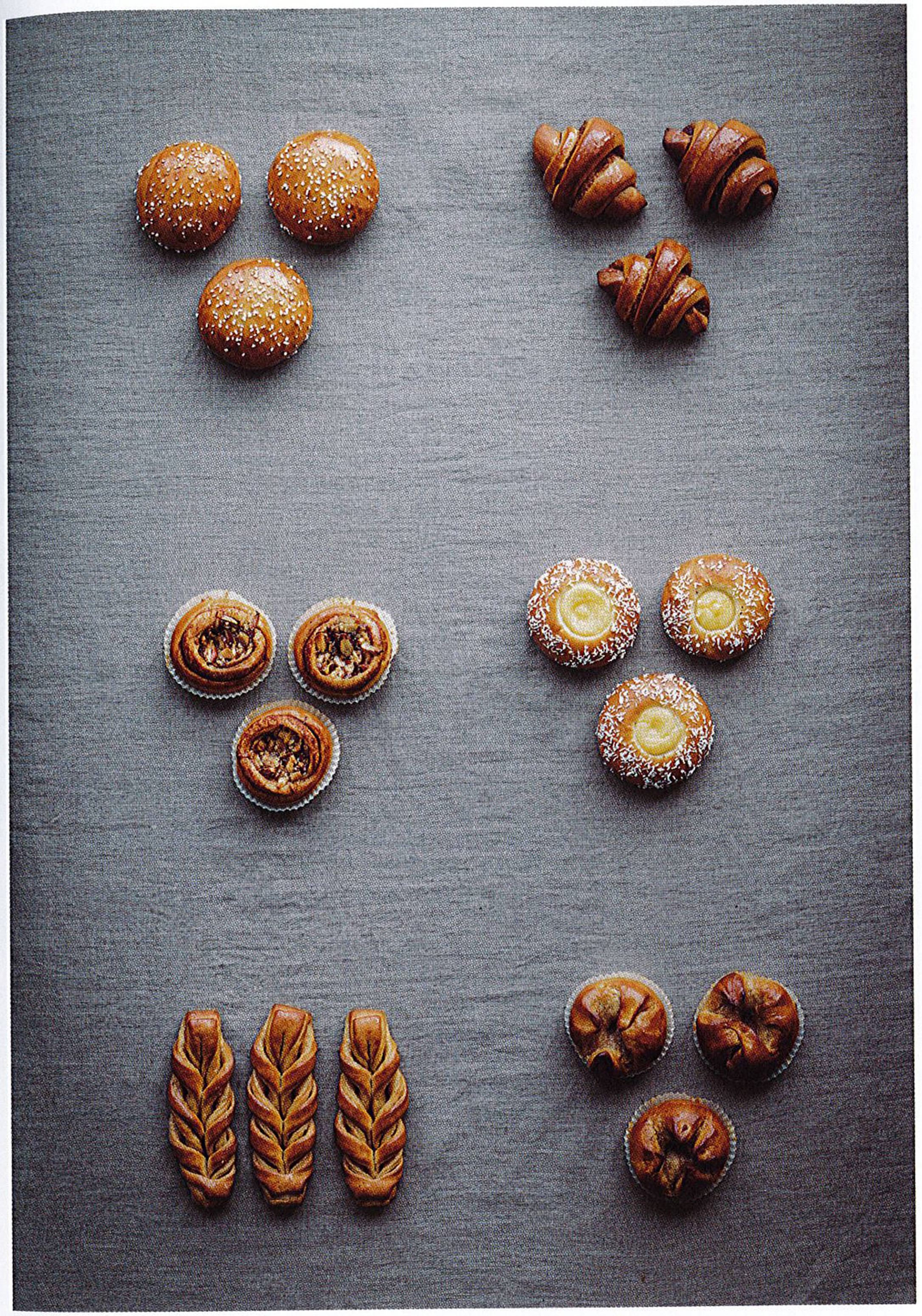
For the filling
1 quantity Apple Compote (page 523)
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter

Follow the instructions for one of the sweet wheat bun doughs on pages 258–9. While the dough is rising for the first time, make the apple compote following the instructions on page 523.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and knead it for a minute. Divide the dough into 25–30 pieces and shape them into buns. Roll out each bun and place a knob of butter and then a good scoop of the apple compote in the middle. Fold the edges over the compote and pinch them together. Put the buns on the prepared baking sheets, making sure to place them pinched-side down. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Brush the buns with the egg wash and sprinkle with pearl sugar. Bake for 10 minutes, or until golden. Leave to cool on wire racks.

For image see page opposite



Clockwise from top left: Apple Compote Buns (page 270); Sweet Leavened Wheat Dough Crescents with Hazelnut Filling (page 269); Open Vanilla Cream Buns / Sun Buns (page 268); Rimbo Buns (page 272); Västgötawienerbröd (page 259); Almond and Toffee Buns / Tosca Buns (page 270)

CARDAMOM BUNS

Kardemummabullar (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 30 buns

1 quantity any one of the three basic Sweet Wheat Bun Doughs (pages 258–9)
plain (all-purpose) flour, for dusting

For the filling
150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
90 g/3¼ oz (½ cup) sugar
1½ tablespoons finely ground cardamom seeds

For the topping
2 tablespoons golden syrup
50 g/2 oz (¼ cup) sugar
½ tablespoon finely ground cardamom seeds

Follow the instructions for one of the sweet wheat bun doughs on pages 258–9. While the dough is rising, make the filling by mixing all of the ingredients together in a bowl.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and knead it for a minute. Divide the dough in half and roll out each half into a rectangular shape about 1–1.5 cm/½–¾ inch wide and the length of a baking sheet. Spread the filling onto the dough rectangles and fold one half of it onto the other, then cut the folded dough rectangles into 4-cm/1½-inch wide slices. Make a cut in each slice, almost all the way to the end, creating the shape of a pair of trousers (pants). Twist each 'leg' and then tie them together as a knot, tucking the end pieces under the bun. Put the buns on the prepared baking sheets and leave to rise for 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7.

Make the topping by mixing the golden syrup and ½ tablespoon water together in a bowl. In a separate bowl, mix the sugar with the cardamom.

Bake the buns for about 10 minutes. Remove the buns from the oven and brush them with the syrup, then sprinkle the sugar-cardamom mix on top. Leave to cool on wire racks.

RIMBO BUNS

Rimbobullar (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Rising time: 2 hours
Makes: 25 buns

25 g/1 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) milk, cold
50 g/2 oz (¼ cup) sugar
360 g/12 oz (2½ cups plus 1 tablespoon) strong wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, at room temperature
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)
90 g/3¼ oz (¾ cup) icing (confectioners') sugar

For the filling
75 g/2¾ oz (5 tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
2 tablespoons sugar
2 teaspoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536)

Dissolve the yeast in the milk in the bowl of a stand mixer. Add the sugar and flour, then mix before adding the butter and working it all together with the dough hook. This dough doesn't rise before shaping the buns.

Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and knead it for a minute. Roll it out to a 40-cm/16-inch square and then cut out 25 smaller squares.

Mix all of the ingredients together for the filling in a bowl and put a spoonful on each square, then fold the corners over the filling and push them together. Place the buns in individual paper cases and put them on baking sheets. Cover with clean dish towels and leave to rise for 2 hours.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Brush the buns with the egg wash and bake for 8 minutes, or until golden. Leave to cool on wire racks.

In a bowl, dissolve the icing (confectioners') sugar in 1 tablespoon water to make the icing, then use it to decorate the buns.

For image see page 271

BUTTER BUNS

Voisilmäpullat (Finland)
Smørboller (Denmark)
Smörbullar (Sweden)

My grandmother used to bake these little buns of pure deliciousness. Some people make them with cardamom in the dough, like many other Scandinavian sweet buns leavened with yeast. I don't think that this is appropriate. For me, this bun is all about the sweetness and flavour of dairy. I tend to use a little Vanilla Sugar (page 536) in the filling, though, as this rather emphasizes the flavour of the butter itself.

Some recipes indicate that the seam of the bun should face downwards in the paper cup, and others that it should face upwards. I prefer the latter, for no other reason than my grandmother did it that way and it feels better. Seam down produces a smoother bun and the seam up a more irregular-shaped one.

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Rising time: 50–70 minutes
Makes: 20 buns

1 quantity any one of the three basic Sweet Wheat Bun Doughs (pages 258–9) omitting cardamom from the recipe
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)

For the filling
150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
200 g/7 oz (1 cup) sugar
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)

To make the sweet wheat bun dough, follow the instructions on pages 258–9.

While the dough is rising (for the first time), prepare the filling by stirring all the ingredients together in a medium bowl.

After the dough has risen, divide it into 20 equal portions and shape them into round buns. With a sharp pair of scissors, cut a cross into each bun from directly above; it should go more than halfway into the dough. Place a good spoonful of filling into the middle of each cross-cut. Use the 4 flaps that formed from the cut to enclose the filling by folding them up and over it, with some overlap.

Place each bun in a paper cupcake case, seam side up, then sit them on a baking sheet. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes., or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 8. Brush the buns lightly with egg wash, then bake until golden.

Allow the buns to cool to room temperature before tasting them. It is very tempting to bite into a bun when they come straight out of the oven, but at this stage the filling is roughly the same temperature as volcanic lava.

NORWEGIAN CUSTARD AND COCONUT BUNS

Skolebrød (Norway)

These are called School buns in Norwegian. I imagine that it comes from them being common in school cafeterias.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 20 buns

1 quantity any one of the three basic Sweet Wheat Bun Doughs (pages 258–9)
1 quantity Vanilla Custard / Pastry Cream (page 533)
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)
1 quantity White Icing (page 530)
50 g/2 oz (1 cup) desiccated coconut

Follow the instructions for one of the sweet wheat bun doughs on pages 258–9.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. After the dough has risen, scrape it out onto a work counter and divide it into 20 equal pieces. Shape them into balls. Place the balls on the prepared baking sheets, cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for about 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Using your finger, make a well in the middle of each leavened bun and pipe a generous amount of vanilla cream into the middle using a piping (pastry) bag.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Brush the buns with the egg wash and bake for 12–15 minutes, or until nicely golden.

Leave to cool completely on wire racks before icing the buns in a ring around the vanilla cream and sprinkling with desiccated coconut.

NORWEGIAN RAISIN BUNS

Rosinboller (Norway)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 20 buns

1 quantity any one of the three basic Sweet Wheat Bun Doughs (pages 258–9)
200 g/7 oz (1⅓ cups) raisins
plain (all-purpose) flour, for dusting
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)

Follow the instructions for one of the sweet wheat bun doughs on pages 258–9. When you have finished kneading the dough, add the raisins and work just until they are mixed in but not longer, you do not want to break them up. Cover and leave the dough to rise for 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Transfer the dough to a very lightly floured work counter, then divide into 20 equal pieces and shape into balls. Place the balls on the prepared baking sheets, cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for another 30 minutes, or until once again doubled in size.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Brush the leavened buns with the egg wash and bake for about 12 minutes. Leave to cool on the baking sheets.

FINNISH QUARK BUNS

Rahkapullat (Finland)
Kvargbullar (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 30 buns

1 quantity any one of the three basic Sweet Wheat Bun Doughs (pages 258–9)
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)

For the filling
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (2¼ cups) quark
1 egg
90 g/3¼ oz (½ cup) sugar
60 g/2¼ oz (½ cup) raisins
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)

Follow the instructions for one of the sweet wheat bun doughs on pages 258–9.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. After the dough has risen for the first time, scrape the dough out onto a work counter and divide it into 30 equal pieces. Shape each piece into a round bun and flatten it slightly before placing them onto the prepared baking sheets. Leave to rise for 30 minutes. or until doubled in size.

Meanwhile, mix all of the ingredients for the topping together in a bowl.

When the buns have risen, preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Press the middle of each bun down lightly and spoon some of the filling into the indentation. Brush with egg wash and bake for 12 minutes, or until golden. Leave to cool on the baking sheets.

BOYS

Pojkar (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 30 buns

1 quantity any one of the three basic Sweet Wheat Bun Doughs (pages 258–9), omitting the cardamom
plain (all-purpose) flour, for dusting

For the topping
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter, melted
90 g/3¼ oz (½ cup) sugar
1 tablespoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)

Follow the instructions for one of the sweet wheat bun doughs on pages 258–9. After the first rise, line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and knead it for a minute. Divide the dough into 30 equal pieces and shape each piece into a log with tapered ends about 30 cm/12 inches long and the thickness of a finger. Fold them in half and twist the 'legs' around each other.

Put the boys on the prepared baking sheets and cover with a clean dish towel. Leave them to rise for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Bake the buns for 8–10 minutes. Remove from the oven and leave to cool for a few minutes before brushing them with melted butter and sprinkling them with the sugar mixed with vanilla sugar.

For image see page 285

SAINT LUCY'S DAY SAFFRON BUNS

Lussebulle / Saffransbröd / Lussekatt (Norway)
Luciapullat (Finland)
Lussekatter (Sweden)

This sweet saffron wheat dough is rolled out into many shapes, all having different names. The most common version – and the one favoured by industry, I guess for its simplicity – is the *julgalt*, or 'Christmas boar'. This is often wrongly named *lussekatt*, or 'Saint Lucy's Cat', which is, as you can plainly see from the illustraion on the right, a completely different shape. Another interesting shape is *prästens hår* or 'priest's hair' shown on page 279.

Serve saffron buns with a cup of coffee as a snack, or why not with your mulled wine? Oh, and these buns can go insanely dry: do eat them the same day they are baked or place in plastic bags and freeze if you need to store them.

You'll need to start this recipe the night before, as the saffron needs sufficient infusing time to develop an intense colour.

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Infusing time: overnight
Makes: 20 julgalt, 10 lussekatt, or 2–5 more elaborate buns, depending on size

1 g/0.04 oz saffron (page 75)
1 tablespoon vodka
1 quantity any one of the three basic Sweet Wheat Bun Doughs (pages 258–9)
1 handful raisins
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)

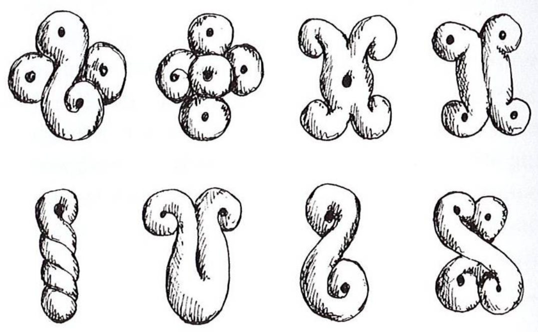
Add the saffron to the vodka. Leave overnight to infuse. Add the saffron liquid to the milk when making the sweet wheat bun dough on page 458–9 and leave to rise, as instructed.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. On a lightly floured work counter, divide the dough into as many pieces as you need for the shape of rolls you want to make (see illustration right). Shape as required and place on the prepared baking sheets. Push the raisins into the dough where indicated in the illustrations, then cover the buns and leave to rise until doubled in size. Before baking, you may have to push the raisins back into the dough with a cocktail stick (toothpick); sometimes they can pop out during the rising.

Preheat the oven to 225°C/435°F/Gas Mark 8.

Brush the buns lightly all over with the egg wash. Bake until nicely golden. Do not overcook them, or they will be the driest things you have ever eaten. The cooking time will depend on what size and shape you have made but should be between 8 and 15 minutes.

Types of bun shapes, from top left to bottom right: *gullvagn*, *julvagn*, *lussekatt*, *lussekatt*, *pojke*, *lilja*, *julgalt*, and *julkuse*.



For image see page 279

SAFFRON WHEAT BUNS (VARIATION 1)

Saffransbullar (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Rising time: 1½ hours
Makes: 30 buns

1 g/0.04 oz saffron (page 75)
1 tablespoon vodka
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter
500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) milk
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
1 teaspoon salt
150 g/5 oz (¾ cup) sugar, plus 1 tablespoon
900 g/2 lb (7½ cups) strong wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
125 g/4½ oz (1 stick) butter, at room temperature
1 egg
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)

For the topping
raisins, soaked in water
pearl sugar, to taste

Add the saffron to the vodka and leave to infuse for at least an hour.

Meanwhile, make the dough. Melt the butter in a pan, add the milk and heat to body temperature (37°C/98.6°F). Dissolve the yeast in the milk and butter mixture in the bowl of a stand mixer. Add the salt, 1 tablespoon of the sugar and most of the flour and work with the dough hook for 5–10 minutes. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave the dough to rise for 1 hour.

Stir the butter with the remaining sugar in a bowl until fluffy, then add the egg and the saffron and vodka infusion and stir. When the dough has finished rising, add the saffron and butter mix and the rest of the flour while working the dough with the dough hook in the stand mixer.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and knead it for a minute. Divide the dough into 30 equal pieces and shape them into your choice of saffron buns (see illustrations opposite). Put the buns on the prepared baking sheets, cover with clean dish towels and leave to rise for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Brush the buns with the egg wash and sprinkle with raisins and/or pearl sugar. Bake for about 10 minutes, then leave to cool on wire racks.

For image see page 279

SAFFRON WHEAT BUNS WITH QUARK / COTTAGE CHEESE (VARIATION 2)

Saffransbullar med kesella / kvarg (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Rising time: 1½ hours
Makes: 30 buns

100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter
500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) milk
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
250 g/9 oz (1 cup) quark or cottage cheese
1 g/0.04 oz saffron (page 75)
150 g/5 oz (¾ cup) sugar
1 teaspoon salt
950 g/2 lb 2 oz (7⅓ cups) strong wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)

To decorate
raisins, soaked in water and drained
pearl sugar, to sprinkle

Melt the butter in a pan, then add the milk and heat to body temperature (37°C/98.6°F). Dissolve the yeast in the milk and butter mixture in the bowl of a stand mixer. Add the quark, saffron, sugar, salt and most of the flour and work the dough with the dough hook, starting at low speed, for 5–10 minutes. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 45 minutes.

Line several baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and knead it for a minute. Divide the dough into 30 equal pieces and shape them into your choice of saffron bun (see illustrations opposite). Put the buns on the prepared baking sheets, cover with clean dish towels and leave to rise for another 45 minutes.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Brush the buns with the egg wash and sprinkle on the raisins and pearl sugar to decorate. Bake for about 10 minutes, or until golden. Leave to cool on wire racks.

For image see page 279

SAFFRON WHEAT BUNS WITH ALMOND PASTE FILLING

Saffransbullar med mandelmassa (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Rising time: 1½ hours
Makes: 30 buns

1 quantity dough from Saffron Wheat Buns (pages 276–7)
plain (all-purpose) flour, for dusting
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)
pearl sugar and/or finely chopped almonds, to decorate

For the filling
200 g/7 oz Almond Paste (page 531)
200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, at room temperature
2 teaspoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536) or 2 teaspoons finely ground cardamom seeds

Follow the recipes for saffron wheat bun dough on pages 276–7. While the dough is rising, make the filling by mixing all of the ingredients together in a bowl to a smooth paste.

Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and knead it for a minute. Roll it out to a rectangular shape, about 5 mm/¼ inch thick. Spread the filling evenly over the dough and roll the dough up into a tight log, starting at the long edge closest to you and working away. With a sharp knife, cut the log into 30 slices and put each slice into a paper case. Place the paper cases on 2 baking sheets, cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Brush the buns with the egg wash and sprinkle some pearl sugar and/or chopped almonds on top.

Bake for about 10 minutes, or until golden, then leave to cool on wire racks.

SAFFRON BRAID OR WREATH

Saffranslängd eller saffranskrans (Sweden)

I think this is a more modern variation on the classic Saint Lucy's Day Saffron Buns (page 276). Generally speaking, the traditional ones could have been shaped into braids and wreaths too, but they were never filled. It's common today to find a sort of hybridization of the kind of wreaths and braids described on page 259 using the traditional saffron dough, which is used in the Saint Lucy's Day buns in pastry shops and bakeries.

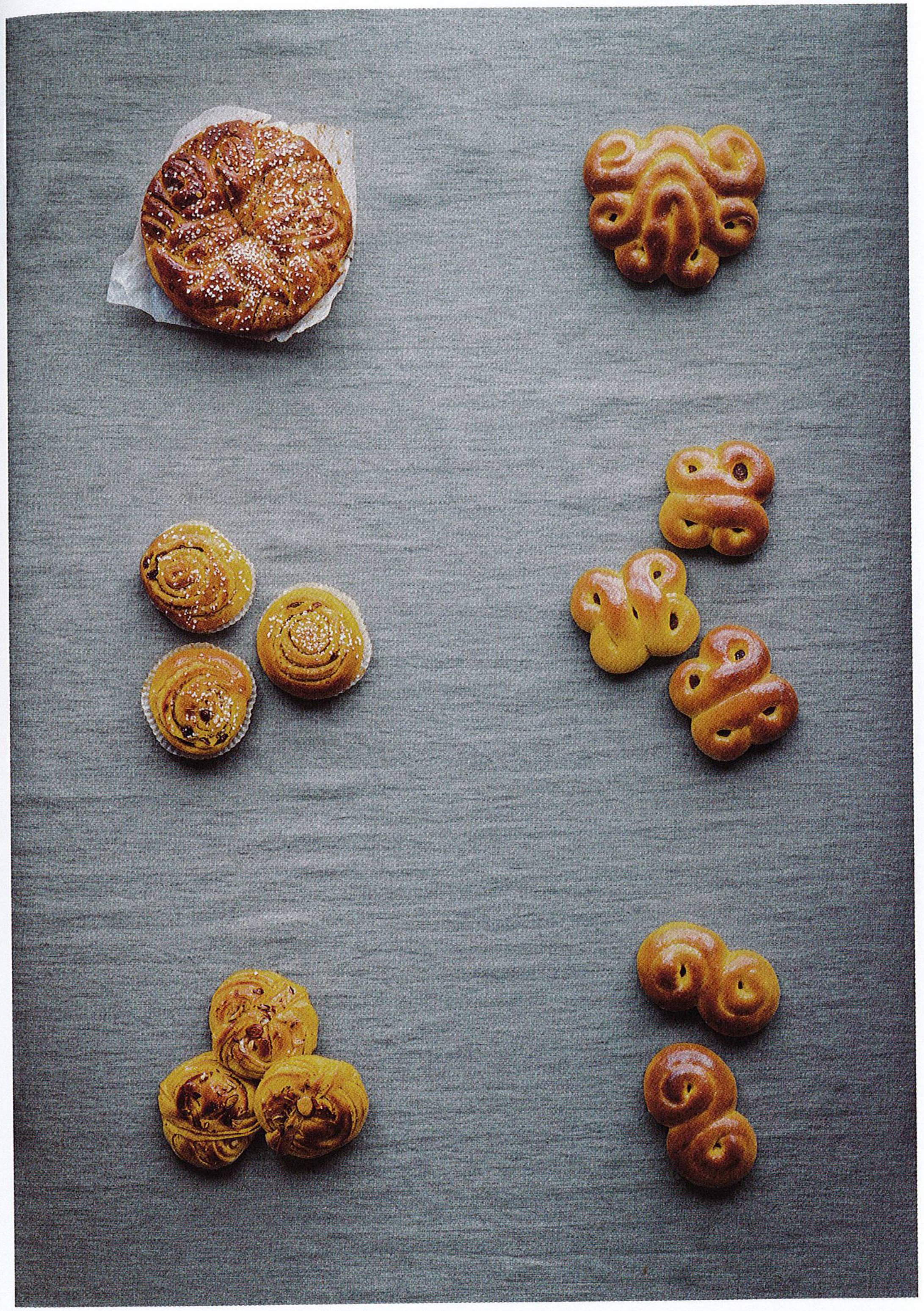
Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Infusing time: overnight
Rising time: 1½ hours
Makes: 2 braids or wreaths

1 quantity either one of the saffron wheat doughs (pages 276–7)
1 quantity White Sugar Pastry Filling (page 530)
Egg Wash (page 73–4)
1 handful pearl sugar, to decorate

Follow the illustrated instructions for making 2 braids or wreaths on page 259. Line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper, then place the braids or wreaths on the prepared baking sheet, cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for about 25 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Brush the braids or wreaths with egg wash and sprinkle the pearl sugar along the length of the braids or wreath to decorate. Bake for 20 minutes, then leave to cool completely on the baking sheet.

For image see page opposite



Clockwise from top left: Saffron Wreath (page 278); Saint Lucy's Day Saffron Buns: prästens hår, lussekatt and julgalt (page 276); Saffron Buns with Quark / Cottage Cheese, Variation 2 (page 277); Saffron Wheat Buns (page 276)

SHROVE TUESDAY CELEBRATIONS IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES

Even though most Nordic people today don't actively practise religion, and don't fast during Lent, Shrove Tuesday (the last day before Lent begins) is often celebrated by having a special pastry.

In Sweden, Norway and Finland, a bun flavoured with cardamom and filled with almond paste (Sweden) or almond paste or jam (Finland), and topped with whipped cream, is eaten. And in Denmark and Iceland, another type of bun, more resembling a filled and glazed Danish (page 282–3) is eaten. There is a lot of crossover in names and traditions on the Shrove Tuesday bun between the countries, so one thing can mean something else when you cross a border, or not.

An example is in southern Sweden where the traditional Swedish Shrove Tuesday pastry, *semla*, is referred to as a *fastlagsbulle*, very similar to the Danish *fastelavnsbolle*, which is frankly, a completely different pastry altogether, even if it is eaten the same day of the year. If you happen to ask for a *semla* in Finland though, you'll be given a plain bun, more intended to be spread with butter and turned into a sandwich.

Each year, at least in Sweden, the Shrove Tuesday buns become available in bakeries a bit earlier. As I am sitting here writing, a new year has just started a few days ago and the first buns are already being sold in my local supermarket; Shrove Tuesday is still months away. Don't get me wrong, I love this rich pastry as much as most other Swedes do, but I think it takes away from the specialness of it to have it all the time. I eat one (or maybe two) a year and even though I might on occasion also go for one after Shrove Tuesday, I at least restrict myself to that week.

The practice of filling a bun with something rich for Shrove Tuesday is very old; people have been doing it at least since the Middle Ages, even though their buns probably didn't look and taste much like the ones we eat today. The cream was added sometime during the sixteenth century (but not whipped), while almonds were obviously not used before people started importing them, around the same time. Cardamom might have been used in very wealthy homes during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries but it didn't become a standard Shrove Tuesday bun flavouring in Sweden, Norway and Finland until after industrialization, when imported spices became more readily available and more accessibly priced. The whipped cream, which today is what in many ways signifies the bun in several countries, wasn't added until the early twentieth century.

Clockwise from top left: Sweet Shrove Tuesday Buns in Milk (page 283); Sweet Shrove Tuesday Buns (page 282); Sweet Shrove Tuesday Buns from Denmark and Iceland, unglazed (page 282)

SWEET SHROVE TUESDAY BUNS FROM NORWAY, FINLAND AND SWEDEN (VERSION 1)

Fastlavnsbolle (Norway)
Laskiaispullat (Finland)
Semla / Fettisdagsbulle / Fastlagsbulle (Sweden)

If you want to go Finnish-style, substitute the almond paste filling with a good spoonful of strawberry jam or raspberry jam (pages 510–11).

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours, plus cooling time
Makes: 12 buns

1 quantity any one of the three basic Sweet Wheat Bun Doughs (pages 258–9), flavoured with cardamom
300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) cream, whipped
icing (confectioners') sugar, for dusting

For the filling
100 g/3½ oz Almond Paste (page 531), grated on the coarse side of a box grater
50 ml/2 fl oz (3½ tablespoons) milk

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6.

Follow the method on pages 258–9 for making sweet wheat buns but shape them into 12 round buns.

Bake for 10–12 minutes, or until golden, then remove from the oven and cool on wire racks.

When the buns have cooled, cut off the very top, either in a circular piece making a round lid or with 3 incisions making a triangular one. With your fingers, dig a little of the bread out of the interior of the bun to make a small cavity, which you can fill with the filling.

Mix the bread that you have dug out of the buns with the almond paste and milk. It should be quite smooth and sticky. Spoon a little of this filling back into the buns and top with a dollop of whipped cream – or pipe it on, if you're feeling fancy. Put the round or triangular hats back on top of the cream and dust with icing (confectioners') sugar before serving.

For image see page 281

SWEET SHROVE TUESDAY BUNS FROM DENMARK AND ICELAND (VERSION 2)

Fastelavnsbolle (Iceland)
Fastelavnsbolle (Denmark)

This Shrove Tuesday bun can be made in various ways. It can be a kind of Danish Pastry (page 372), which has the top cut off before being filled with cream and/or jam or Vanilla Custard/Pastry Cream (page 533). Alternatively, as below, it is made with a Sweet Wheat Bun Dough and filled with Vanilla Custard/Pastry Cream or, more traditionally, a White Sugar Pastry Filling (page 530).

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 12 buns

½ quantity any one of the three basic Sweet Wheat Bun Doughs (pages 258–9), enriched with 1 egg
plain (all-purpose) flour, for dusting
1 quantity Chocolate Icing (page 530)

For the filling
1 quantity White Sugar Pastry Filling (page 530) or 1 quantity Vanilla Custard /Pastry Cream (page 533)

Follow the method on pages 258–9 for making the sweet wheat bun dough, adding the egg to the cooled milk and butter mixture before you add the flour.

Tip the dough onto a lightly floured work counter and divide it in half. Roll each half out to create 2 rectangles about 1 cm/½ inch in thickness. Use a 6 cm/2½ inch cookie cutter to mark 12 bun outlines on one piece of the dough. Place a spoonful of filling into the centre of each outline, then sit the second layer of dough on top. Make sure that the edges are nicely sealed and that not too much air is trapped inside before cutting them all the way through with the cutter, creating a sort of ravioli of dough with filling inside.

Line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper. Transfer the buns to the prepared baking sheet, cover with a clean dish towel and leave the buns to rise for 30 minutes, or until they have doubled in size.

Bake for 10–12 minutes, or until golden, then remove from the oven and cool on wire racks. Glaze with chocolate icing before serving.

For image see page 281

SWEET SHROVE TUESDAY BUNS IN MILK (VERSION 3)

Hetvägg (Sweden)

In Sweden, some people like to eat their annual Shrove Tuesday bun in a bowl of hot milk, which makes it into more of a dessert, called *hetvägg*. In English this translates to 'hot wall', although it has nothing at all to do with walls. It actually derives from the old north German word *hetwegge* – from *het*, meaning 'hot' and *wegge*, meaning a 'wedge' shape. Originally, the dessert could include any kind of bread that was formed into a double wedge. The connection to Shrove Tuesday – and to a specific use of wheat flour bread – wasn't made until the eighteenth century, when the practice merged with the existing tradition of eating rich, filled sweet buns on the last day before Lent began.

Up until the cream was added in the early years of the twentieth century and what was a dish turned into an individual pastry, this was the prevailing way of consuming the Shrove Tuesday bun, simply because it made a dry, stale bread into something soft, rich and tasty. As baking and food production became more efficient and refrigeration made it possible to store foods for longer, the need to soak a dry bread in warm milk diminished and the fresh bun with its almond filling and whipped cream topping became the standard.

In several books dating from around 1920, I have found references to soaking the now modernized *semla* in warm milk in the way that was done to the old creamless dry type many years earlier. I think this could have been a case of caring for the traditional ways more than an actual unbroken tradition slowly evolving, as it quite frankly doesn't make sense to soak perfectly fresh and already soft bread in hot milk as it does with a dry one, which was the reason for the soaking in the first place. Even today, I have curiously observed that kind of backwards behaviour among those defending this way of eating their *semla*. Those who eat it in milk seem to rather often be people who look at themselves as a sort of defender of the traditional way, the real way or simply the way that is better than other peoples' ways just because it isn't the same as what everyone else is doing. The same men or women who write a sternly worded letter (not an email) to the newspaper after spotting a spelling error on page 11 or who shudder at the thought of wearing a brown belt with their trousers (pants) for dinner after 6.00 p.m.

I do think (and hope) that they all actually like the soggy swollen bread and the melting cream, even if I don't. But their claim that it is the traditional way is simply faulty as the soaking practice – it seems to me – pretty much dies out, as it wasn't needed any more, before being picked up again a couple of decades later and just applied to an entirely updated Shrove Tuesday bun, which is objectively and by a majority of people seen as more tasty left as it is. An act probably committed by the same people, then as those keeping it today, the defenders of a slightly more proper way, even if it doesn't make sense.

But after all, it is great that we are all different, even in this case.

For image see page 281

KARLSBADER DOUGH

Karlsbaderdeg (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Resting time: 1 hour
Makes: enough dough for 25 buns

250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) milk
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar
1 teaspoon salt
650 g/1 lb 7 oz (5¼ cups plus 2 tablespoons) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
175 g/6 oz (1½ sticks) butter, at room temperature
1 egg

Heat the milk in a pan to body temperature (37°C /98.6°F). Dissolve the yeast in the milk in the bowl of a stand mixer. Add the sugar, salt, flour and baking powde while mixing with the dough hook at low speed. Finish by adding the soft butter and the egg. Knead the dough for 10 minutes, then leave it to rise for 1 hour.

KARLSBADER BUNS WITH ALMOND PASTE FILLING

Karlsbaderbullar (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Rising time: 1½ hours
Makes: 25 buns

1 quantity Karlsbader Dough (above)
plain (all-purpose) flour, for dusting
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)

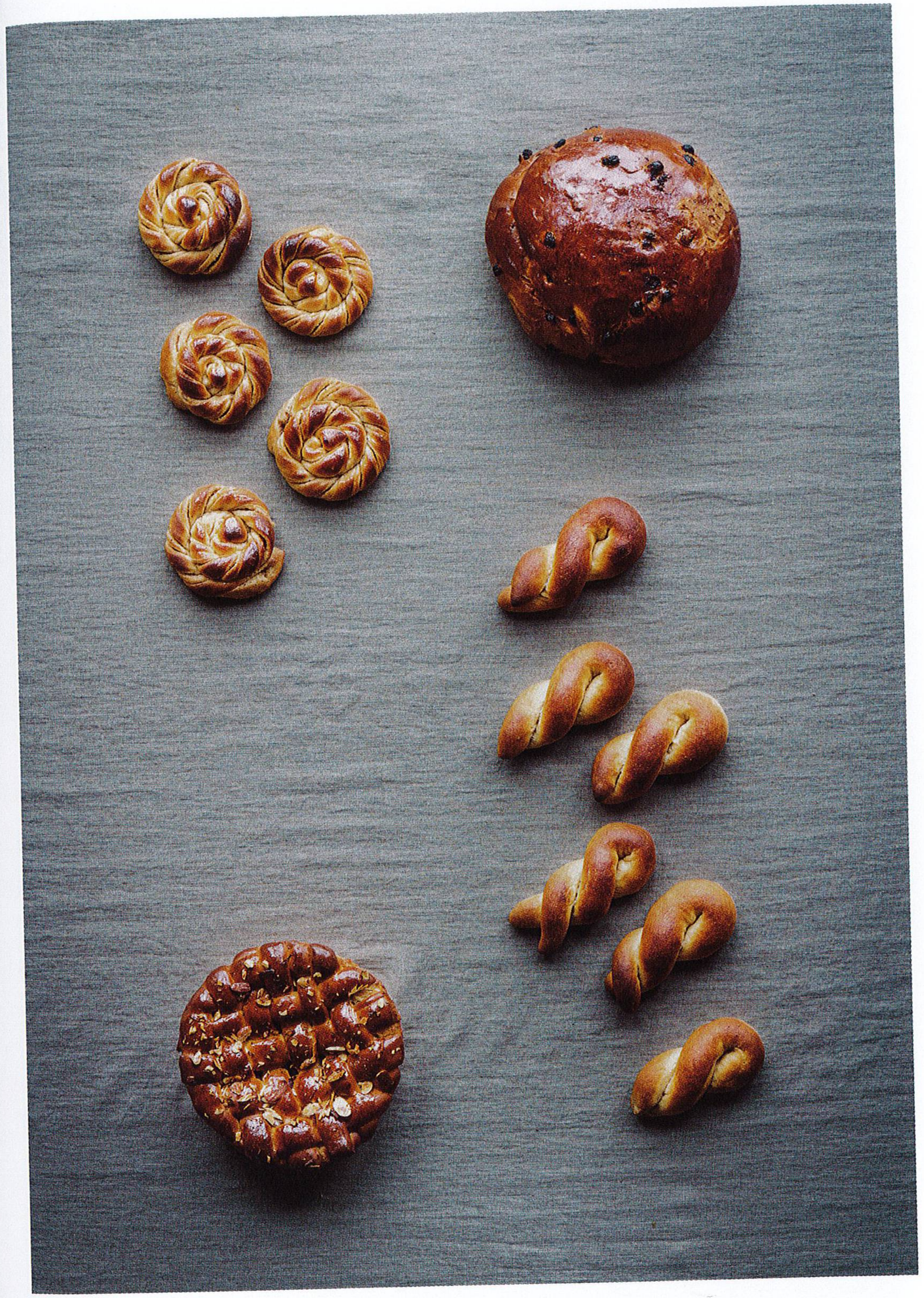
For the filling
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
100 g/3½ oz Almond Paste (page 531)
1 tablespoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)

Follow the instructions for the Karlsbader dough above. While the dough is rising, make the filling by mixing all of the ingredients together in a bowl. Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and knead it for a minute. Roll it out to a 60 x 30-cm/24 x 12-inch rectangle, then divide the dough into 10 x 10-cm/4 x 4-inch squares. Put a good spoonful of the filling in the middle of each square, then fold the corners towards the middle and push down a little. Alternatively shape them into twisted knots (see illustration page 261).

Put the buns on the prepared baking sheets, cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 45 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Brush the buns with the egg wash and bake for 10–12 minutes. Leave to cool on wire racks.

For image see page opposite



Clockwise from top left: Karlsbader Buns with Almond Paste Filling (page 284); Norwegian Christmas Bread (page 288); Boys (page 275); Danish Almond Tart Leavened with Yeast (page 288)

BROWN SUGAR YEAST CAKE FROM FUNEN ISLAND

Brunsviger (Denmark)

This recipe is originally from the central Danish island of Funen – or *Fyn* in Danish – but these days *brunsviger* are found all around the country. *Brunsviger* cake is often flavoured with ground cassia cinnamon and served lukewarm for breakfast. In Funen, slices of *brunsviger* are sometimes served as a sandwich topping on buttered Danish breakfast buns or *rundstykker*, in which case the sugared side of the cake should be placed directly onto the buttered side of the bread.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Rising time: 20–40 minutes
Makes: 15 portions

250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) milk
25 g/1 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
120 g/4 oz (1 stick) butter, at room temperature, plus extra to grease
2 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon salt
2 eggs
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (4 cups plus 2 tablespoons) weak (soft) wheat flour

For the brown sugar pastry topping
150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
250 g/9 oz (1⅓ cups) soft brown sugar
2 tablespoons ground cassia cinnamon

Pour the milk into the bowl of a stand mixer, dissolve the yeast in the milk, then add all the remaining ingredients. Knead with the dough hook at a medium speed until smooth and shiny, which can take 8–12 minutes depending on the efficiency of the machine you use.

Butter a 25 x 30-cm/10 x 12-inch baking sheet. Spread the sticky dough out onto the prepared sheet and leave to rise until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6.

To make the topping, combine all the ingredients in a small pot and heat gently until it is all melted and shiny looking.

Wet your hands and press your fingers down into the dough to make little indentations where puddles of the melted topping can form. Pour the topping evenly over the dough and bake until the surface is golden and bubbly and the cake is cooked through.

Let the cake cool a little in the pan. Cut it into 15 portions and serve while still warm.

For image see page opposite

Brown Sugar Yeast Cake from Funen Island (page 286)

NORWEGIAN CHRISTMAS BREAD

Julekake (Norway)

Julekake is a sort of sweet and rich wheat bread, leavened with yeast. It is flavoured with cardamom and often filled with dried and candied fruits. *Julekake* is traditionally served for Christmas with different toppings, which can be either sweet or savoury. I have also seen a few recipes flavoured with saffron, a bit like the Swedish Saint Lucy's Day Saffron Buns (page 276).

Preparation time: 45 minutes
Rising time: 50 minutes
Cooking time: 30–40 minutes
Makes: 2 loaves

150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons) butter
500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) milk
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
650 g/1 lb 7 oz (4½ cups) strong wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
140 g/4¾ oz (⅔ cup plus 1 tablespoon) sugar
½ teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons ground cardamom
150 g/5 oz (1¼ cups) raisins or other dried or candied fruits
Egg Wash (page 73–4)

Melt the butter slowly in a medium pan. Pour in the milk and warm very gently to a temperature of about 37°C/98.6°F. Add the yeast and stir to dissolve.

Pour the mixture into the bowl of a stand mixer. Add the flour, sugar, salt and cardamon. Knead with the dough hook until the dough is shiny and smooth and comes away from the sides of the bowl. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes, or until almost doubled in size.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Place the dough on a lightly floured work counter and add the dried fruits. Work the dough by hand until the fruits are evenly incorporated. Divide the dough in half and shape into 2 large round buns. Place them on the prepared baking sheets. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for about 20 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Brush the buns lightly with the egg wash and bake for 30–40 minutes. They should have a nice golden colour to them when ready.

For image see page 285

DANISH ALMOND TART LEAVENED WITH YEAST

Rungstedkage (Denmark)
Rungstedkaka (Sweden)

This is a classic Danish pastry in which the equally classic Danish pastry filling, *remonce,* (page 530, which version you pick depends on your taste) is sort of enveloped in sweet wheat dough leavened with yeast. Some recipes for *rungstedkage* contain raisins and/or cinnamon and others don't. If you like raisins, 40 g/1½ oz (¼ cup) is a suitable amount and it should be incorporated into the pastry filling before this goes into the cake itself. The top layer of dough is brushed with either milk or egg wash (pages 73–4) before being baked. The egg wash will give a slightly shinier appearance, but pick whichever way you want. Some recipes also have flaked almonds and/or sugar sprinkled over the top layer of the dough after it has been brushed before the baking. About 3 tablespoons of each is enough. *Rungstedkage* is either served as it is or with whipped cream or sour cream on the side.

Preparation and cooking time: 40 minutes
Resting time: 45 minutes
Makes: 8 pieces

50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
2 tablespoons cream
½ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon sugar
2 eggs
250 g/9 oz (2 cups plus 1 tablespoon) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
120 g/4 oz (1 stick) butter, cold and cut into 1-cm/½-inch dice, plus extra to grease
1 quantity Danish Pastry Filling, brown or white (page 530)
milk or Egg Wash (pages 73–4)
whipped cream or sour cream, to serve (optional)

Dissolve the yeast in the cream, then add that, together with the salt, sugar and eggs, to a bowl and mix well.

Add the flour and butter to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and work until a coarse, grainy texture is achieved. Switch to the dough hook, then add the cream, sugar and egg mixture and work until it is a smooth and shiny dough.

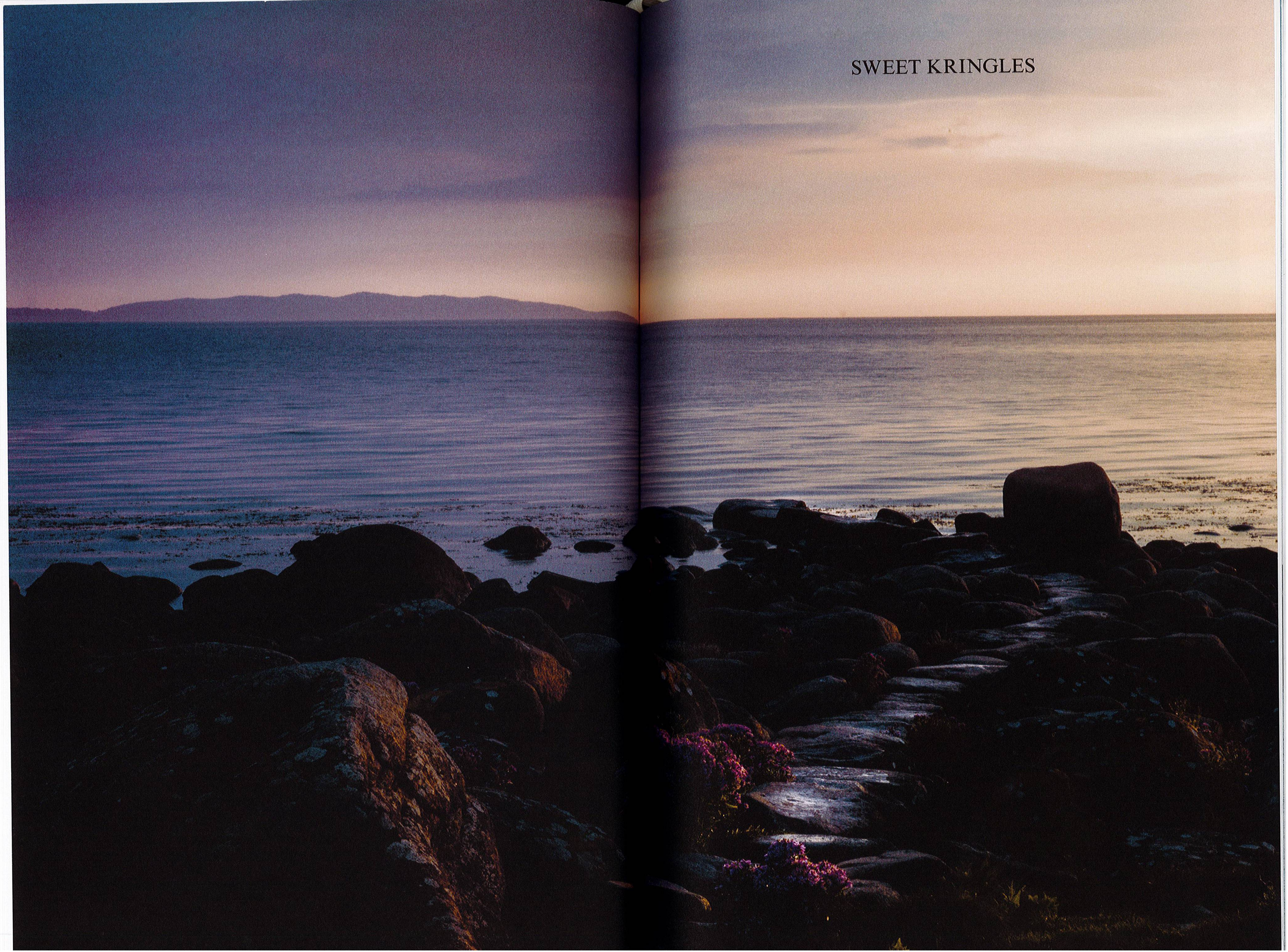
Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch round cake pan.

Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and cut it into 2 pieces, one a little larger than the other. Roll the larger one out to a round. It should be large enough to line the interior of the pan. Line the pan with this larger sheet of dough and spread the filling in an even layer over the dough.

Roll the smaller piece of dough out the same way to a round large enough to just cover the diameter of the pan. Cut the dough into 2-cm/¾-inch strips and place them over the filling in a lattice pattern. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 45 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Brush the tart with milk or egg wash and sprinkle with almonds or sugar, if using. Bake for 20–25 minutes. Leave to cool to room temperature in the pan before turning the tart out.

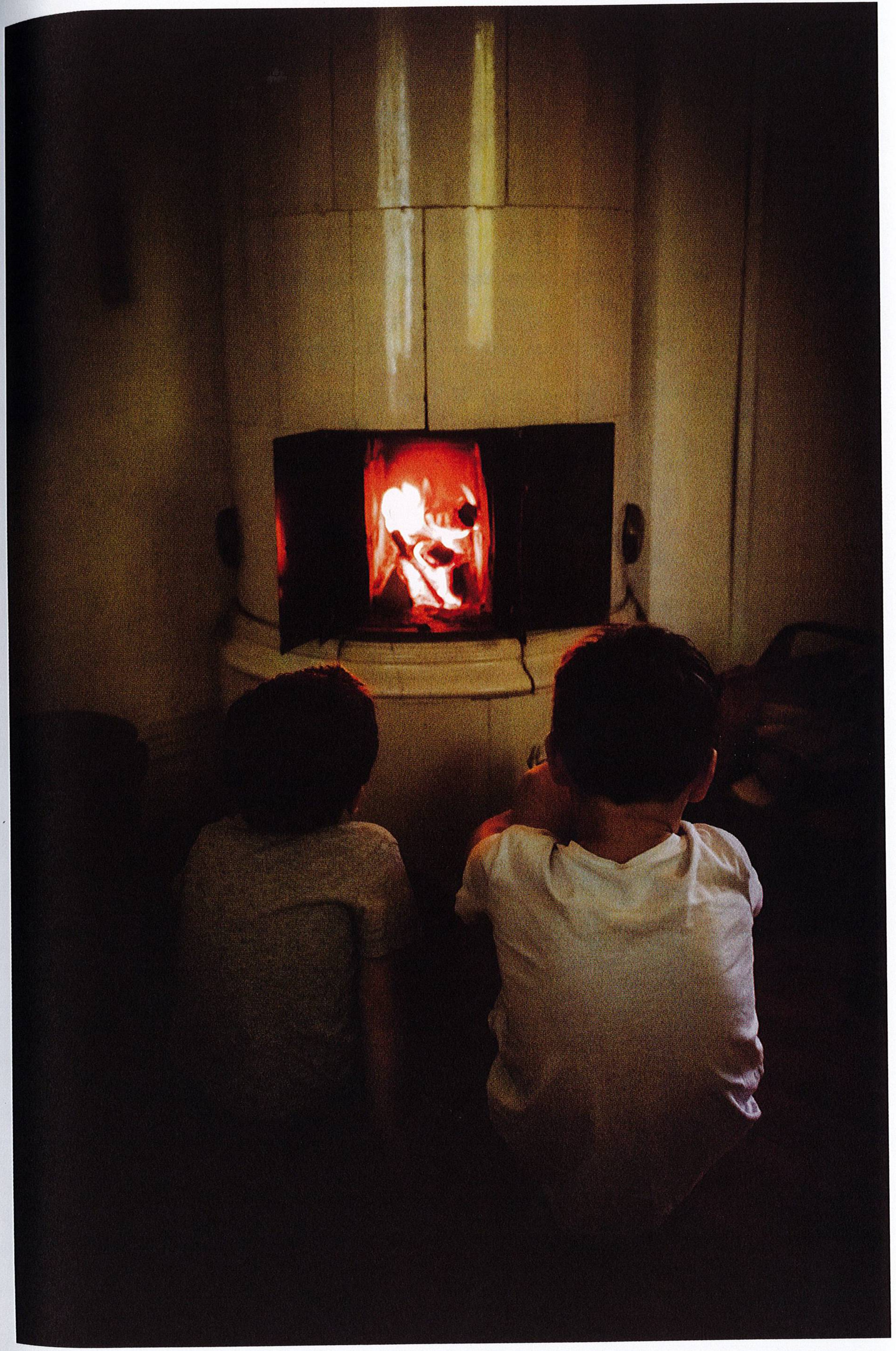
For image see page 285



SWEET KRINGLES

Previous page: Gubbahålan after an evening swim, south Sweden 2017.

Opposite: The boys warming up in front of a tile stove, Torpet, Sweden, 2017.



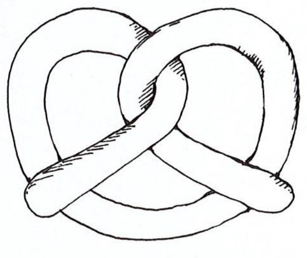
SWEET KRINGLES

There is something special about a kringle, which Wikipedia refers to as 'a Nordic variety of pretzel'. I think it might be that it makes you feel a bit special. I mean it's just a pastry and not even a very fancy one in the sense that it's rarely filled with anything expensive, so it feels a bit like someone has spent a bit of extra care shaping it just for you. The kringle shape differs from other shapes of buns and pastries, like the cut roll / snail (page 262), which is simply a log cut into slices, or the knot (page 260), which is really just a simpler and faster way for bakers to make buns look fancy in a way that home-bakers rarely understand how to replicate. A kringle takes time, practice and care to shape just right, and you use only your hands when doing it. I think that's a beautiful thing.

The pretzel, which later turned into a kringle, was brought to the Nordics by being introduced to Denmark by Roman Catholic monks in the thirteenth century. It exists in all parts of the region today in some form or another, most of them sweet.

Nordic-style pretzels are generally known as kringles, and come in many guises – both sweet and savoury. There are many variations on the sweet kringle theme: some are filled and others not, some are shaped into a pretzel knot and others into more of a circular shape. Most sweet kringles are made from a Sweet Wheat Bun Dough (page 258–9) but can sometimes be made from Danish Pastry (page 372).

In Denmark and the Faroe Islands, filled sweet kringles are often served at birthdays, when they are known as *fødselsdagskringle* in Denmark and *föðingardagskringla* on the Faroe Islands, both meaning 'birthday kringle'.



DANISH SWEET KRINGLE

Gerkringla (Faroe Islands)
Kringle (Denmark)

This large kringle is usually filled with a White Sugar Pastry Filling (page 530) – either plain, or with the addition of a good handful of raisins. I have also seen some recipes that include orange zest or candied orange peel for added flavour.

It is often sprinkled with flaked or chopped almonds and/or pearl sugar for decoration or sometimes it can be drizzled with White Icing (page 530).

Large sweet kringles are often served a bit like a torte, on a serving plate, to be cut by a host or by the eater into suitably sized servings.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Rising time: 30–40 minutes
Makes: 1 large kringle, enough for 10–12 pieces

For the dough
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
50 ml/2 fl oz (3½ tablespoons) milk
2 eggs
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar
pinch of salt
1 teaspoon finely ground cardamom seeds
200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, cubed
350 g/12 oz (2½ cups plus 1 tablespoon) strong wheat flour, plus extra for dusting

For the filling
1 quantity White Sugar Pastry Filling (page 530)
1 good handful raisins (optional)

For the topping
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)
flaked or chopped almonds and/or pearl sugar, to decorate (optional)
White Icing (page 530), optional

In the bowl of a stand mixer, mix the yeast to a paste with the milk. Add the eggs, sugar, salt, cardamom and butter to the mixture. Sift in the flour and work with the paddle attachment until fully combined and smooth.

Line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Roll the dough out on a lightly floured work counter to a 15 x 50-cm/6 x 20-inch rectangle. Spread the filling thickly along the centre of the rectangle, leaving a 2.5-cm/1-inch margin at each end. Brush the long edges lightly with water, then bring them up and over the filling to enclose it completely. Allow about 2 cm/¾ inch of overlap to ensure the filling doesn't ooze out of the kringle while it bakes. You should end up with a long, fat log.

Lift the log onto the prepared baking sheet. You can then leave it as a log shape or bring the ends together to form a circle or form into the traditional knot shape (see illustration opposite). If you choose the last option, then taper the ends a little, so the knot isn't too thick. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30–40 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Brush the kringle lightly all over with egg wash. Scatter on your choice of topping. Some people now use a pair of scissors to cut decorative patterns in the dough – sometimes all the way down to the filling – others leave the kringle intact. If you do cut all the way down to the filling, then some will ooze out during the baking and caramelize, which can be quite delicious. Do beware of cutting the sides of the kringle, as all the filling will drain out.

Bake for about 30 minutes, or until the kringle is golden in colour. Leave to cool on a wire rack then decorate, if you like.

For image see page 297

BUTTER KRINGLES

Smörkringlor (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 16 kringles

1 quantity any one of the three basic Sweet Wheat Bun Doughs (pages 258–9) or Karlsbader Dough (page 284)
plain (all-purpose) flour, for dusting

For the filling
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
60 g/2¼ oz (½ cup) icing (confectioners') sugar
1 tablespoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)

For the topping
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter, melted
sugar, for dipping

Follow the instructions for one of the sweet wheat bun dough recipes on pages 258–9. The Karlsbader dough on page 284 is nice for these kringles. While the dough is rising for the first time, make the filling by mixing all of the ingredients together in a bowl.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and knead it for a minute. Divide it in half and roll each piece into a 40-cm/16-inch square. Spread the filling over the dough squares, then fold one half over the other. Cut each folded dough square into 8 strips, making 16 in total. Twist them and shape into kringles (see illustration opposite).

Put the kringles on the prepared baking sheets, cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Bake the kringles for 8–10 minutes or until golden. Leave to cool on wire racks. When the kringles have cooled a little, brush them with melted butter and dip them in sugar.

SWEDISH SUGARED SWEET KRINGLES

Sockerkringlor (Sweden)

After baking, these individual kringles are brushed with melted butter and then rolled in sugar to coat them completely. They are leavened with both yeast and baking powder (or in some recipes, with yeast and baker's ammonia), which gives them a very particular texture. The dough has diced butter worked into it, similar to a French brioche, which remains emulsified during the kneading. This is different to most Swedish sweet buns, where the butter is melted before being added to the dough.

Some recipes are plain, while others are flavoured with cardamom or vanilla; I prefer cardamom.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Rising time: 50–60 minutes
Makes: 20 kringles

250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) milk
50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
4 eggs
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar
pinch of salt
2 tablespoons baking powder
1 kg/2¼ lb (7⅓ cups) strong wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
2 teaspoons finely ground cardamom seeds or 2 teaspoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536), optional
250 g/9 oz (2¼ sticks) cold butter, cut into 1 cm/½ inch dice

For the filling
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, at room temperature

To decorate
sugar, to coat
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter, melted

Dissolve the yeast into the milk in the bowl of a stand mixer. Add the eggs, sugar, salt, baking powder, flour and flavourings, if using and knead with the dough hook for a few minutes before adding the butter. Knead at a medium speed until the butter is completely incorporated and the dough is smooth and shiny. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 25–30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

While the dough is rising, line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

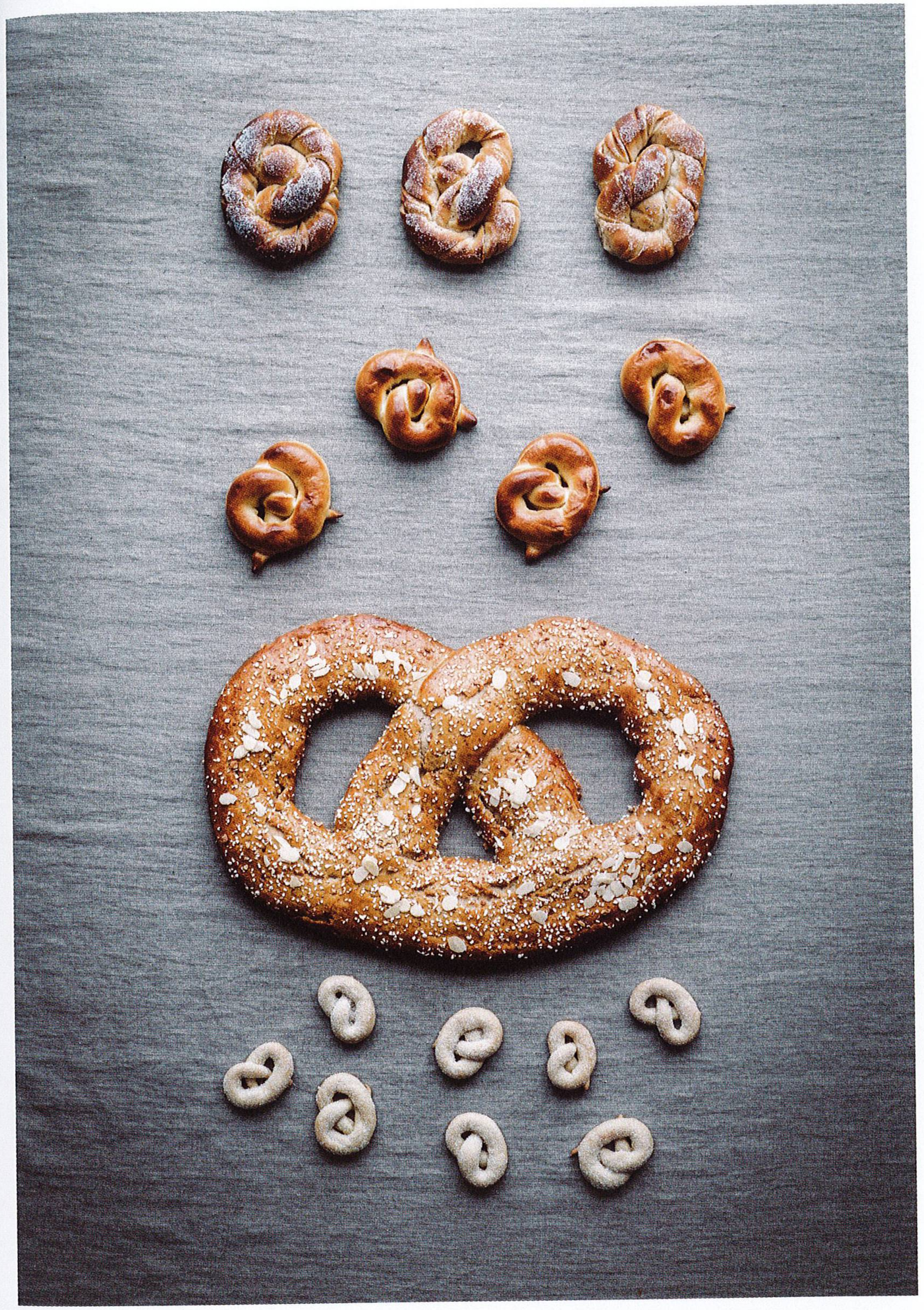
Roll the dough out on a lightly floured work counter to a 35 x 55 cm/14 x 22 inch rectangle. Brush half of the rectangle along its length with some butter. Fold the buttered half over the other half to form a thicker rectangle. Slice this into 20 short strips (of dough sandwiched with butter), which will each become a kringle.

Pick up a strip and twist along its length. Form into the traditional knot shape (see illustration on page 294) and place on the prepared baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining dough strips. Cover them with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes.

While the kringles are rising, preheat the oven to 225°C/435°F/Gas Mark 8 and spread the sugar out on a plate.

Bake the kringles until they are pale golden in colour. Brush with melted butter while they are still warm, then roll them in sugar to coat completely. Leave to cool on a wire rack.

For image see page opposite



Top to bottom: Swedish Sugared Sweet Kringels (page 296); Finnish Water Kringles (page 298); Danish Sweet Kringle (page 294); Glass Kringles (page 298)

GLASS KRINGLES

Glaskringlor (Sweden)

These kringles are brittle as glass and almost translucent. It's very important not to make them too thick because that will mess with the ratio of surface area that can be sugar coated in relation to plain crumb.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Resting time: 2 hours
Makes: 30 kringles

125 g/4½ oz (1 stick) butter, cold and diced
150 g/5 oz (1¼ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
2 tablespoons cream
sugar, for the topping

Place all of the ingredients, except the sugar, in a food processor and process until well combined. Cover the dough with clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave it in the refrigerator for 2 hours.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Place the dough on a lightly floured work counter and roll it out to a 15 x 25-cm/6 x 10-inch rectangle. Cut into thirty 15-cm/6-inch long slices. Shape the slices into kringles (see illustration on page 294) and place them on the prepared baking sheets. Bake them for about 7 minutes. The kringles should not colour.

Spread the sugar out on a wide plate and turn the kringles in the sugar as soon as you have removed them from the oven.

For image see page 297

FINNISH WATER KRINGLES

Vesirinkelit (Finland)
Vattenkringlor (Sweden)

When reading the recipe for these boiled and baked wheat kringles it's very easy to imagine a connection to the bagel, a bread nowadays mostly associated with America and perhaps even more so New York and its Jewish community. The bagel actually originated in Poland during the seventeenth century and I'm fairly certain the bagel of today has developed from the same basic idea as the Finnish water kringle. *Vesirinkelit* are usually eaten as a snack in the afternoon with coffee, milk or cordial.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Resting time: 1½ hours
Makes: 20–30 kringles

50 g/2 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
700 g/1 lb 8½ oz (5 cups plus 2 tablespoons) strong wheat flour
2½ tablespoons salt

Put the yeast and 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) water into the bowl of a stand mixer and stir until the yeast is completely dissolved. Add the flour and 1 tablespoon of the salt to the mixer and work the dough with the dough hook until it is shiny and comes away from the sides of the bowl. It should take about 10 minutes. Leave the dough to rise for 1 hour, or until doubled in size.

Line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper. Scrape the dough out onto a work counter and divide into 20–30 equal pieces. Roll each piece out into a string of about 1 cm/½ inch in diameter and shape it into a ring by joining the ends together. Place the kringles onto the prepared baking sheet, cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for about 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 250°C/480°F/Gas Mark 9.

Bring 1.5 litres/50 fl oz (6¼ cups) water and the remaining salt to the boil in a pot. Lower to a brisk simmer and add the kringles, a few at a time, to the water. Cook for about 40 seconds before carefully lifting them out with a slotted spoon and placing them back on the baking sheet.

When all the kringles are boiled, bake them for 15 minutes, or until deeply golden. Leave them to cool on the baking sheet.

For image see page 297

KRINGLES FROM VIIPURI

Viipurinrinkeli (Finland)
Viborgskringlor (Sweden)

Viipuri (or Viborg in Swedish) is a town that has been alternating between Swedish, Finnish and Russian control throughout its history. The last time it changed nationality was in 1944 when it, as part of the Paris Peace Treaties, went from being Finnish to being part of the Soviet Union. Viipuri (Vyborg in Russian) is located in the now Russian Leningrad Oblast on the Baltic coast, not far from St Petersburg. A particular kind of large kringle has been baked there at least since the fifteenth century and it is thought that the tradition started in the city's Franciscan monastery. Viipuri kringles were historically baked on a layer of straw to even out the heat of the oven and are still baked in Finland. They have a big nostalgic value there, especially among the community of émigrés from Viipuri and Finns old enough to have lived when the town was still part of Finland.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Resting time: overnight
Makes: 4 kringles

700 ml/24 fl oz (3 cups) milk, at body temperature (37°C/98.6°F)
75 g/2¾ oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
4 eggs
350 g/12 oz (1¾ cups) sugar
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter
1.75 kg/3 lb 13 oz (14½ cups) strong wheat flour
2 teaspoons finely ground cardamom seeds
⅓ nutmeg, freshly grated

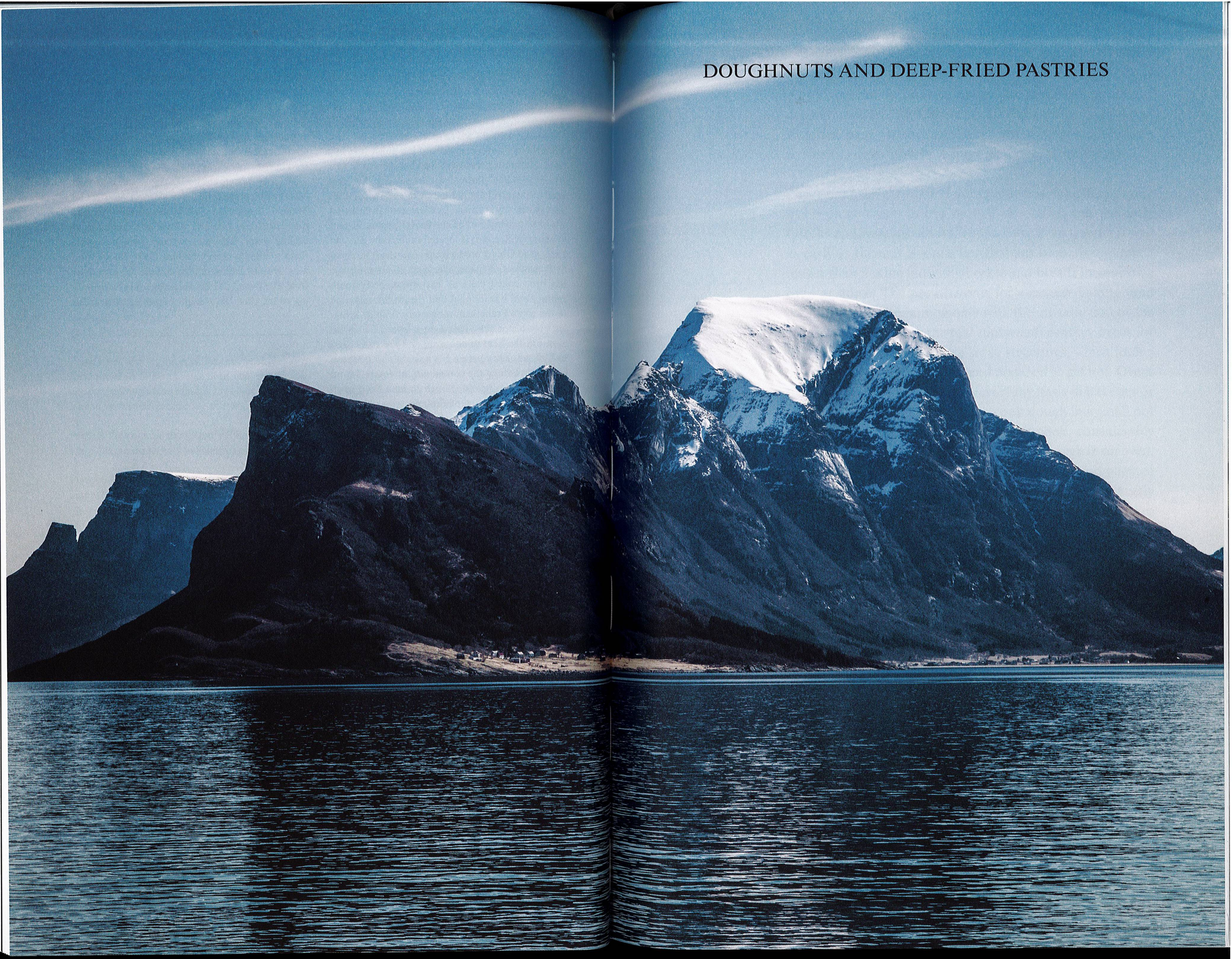
Add the milk and yeast to the bowl of a stand mixer and stir until the yeast is completely dissolved. Add all of the remaining ingredients to the mixer and work with the dough hook for about 5 minutes. The texture of the dough will be firm. Leave to rise for 40 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Scrape the dough out onto a work counter and knead it by hand for 2 minutes. Divide the dough into 4 equal pieces and roll each one out into a log, which should be thickest towards the middle and taper significantly towards the ends. Shape each log into a kringle (see illustration on page 294) and place 2 on each prepared baking sheet.

Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for about 20 minutes, or until they have almost doubled in size.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Just before the kringles go into the oven they should be brushed with liberal amounts of boiling water. This makes them shiny and gives them a slightly chewy texture. Bake for 25 minutes, or until a dark golden colour. Remove them from the oven, and brush them again with boiling water, then leave them to cool on wire racks.



DOUGHNUTS AND DEEP-FRIED PASTRIES

Previous page: View from the Hurtigruten ferry boat, northern Norway, spring 2013.

We don't have a huge number of deep-fried pastries in Nordic baking, but the ones we do have are important, especially around holidays like Christmas. Crullers (pages 308–9) and Rosettes (page 310), which though not in every modern family's eating repertoire, have huge historical significance.

I have not been able to find out exactly how long deep-frying has been common in our part of the world, but the early Greeks and Romans did it for sure. Even if we weren't frying as early as them, it is a practice that has been around much longer than baking individual cakes and breads in your own oven at home. The use of ovens for everyday baking (and cooking) became common only with the introduction of the cast-iron stove. Before the mid-nineteenth century ovens for baking were exclusively large stone structures, which took a considerable amount of work and firewood to get hot. Ovens like these were only used on an everyday basis in bakeries or large and wealthy households. To cook dough in a small pot of hot fat was, for the historical home cook, considerably easier in many ways than baking the same dough in an oven. Today, most of us see deep-frying as messy and complicated in comparison to other baking techniques, but this is largely because modern electric and gas ovens are so much easier to use than their ancient predecessors.

Today, many commercially available vegetable-based fats are used in deep-frying, but traditionally, rendered animal fats were more commonly used simply because they were easier to find and cheaper to buy before industrial farming introduced oil crops, like rapeseed (canola) or sunflower on a large scale. There is something about the flavour of pastries fried in animal fats that I find quite appealing. I have included a recipe for a traditional Swedish deep-frying mix (page 538), so try it out if you want to.

DOUGHNUTS

Smultringer (Norway)
Munkit (Finland)
Munkar (Sweden)

I like to fry doughnuts in *flottyr* (page 538), which is a mixture of lard and tallow, but any neutral, vegetable-based fat or oil is also fine.

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: 30 doughnuts

20 g/¾ oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) cold milk
150 g/5 oz (¾ cup) sugar
2 eggs
600 g/1 lb 5 oz (4⅓ cups plus 1 tablespoon) strong wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
1 teaspoon salt
125 g/4½ oz (1 stick) butter, at room temperature
vegetable-based fat or oil, for deep-frying
sugar, for coating

Mix the milk and yeast in the bowl of a stand mixer and stir until the yeast is dissolved. Add the sugar, eggs, flour and salt and knead with the dough hook for a few minutes before adding the butter. Knead until the dough is smooth and shiny. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for about 30 minutes, until doubled in size.

Roll the dough out on a lightly floured work counter to a thickness of 1–1½ cm/½–¾ inch. Cut into 30 circles with a pastry (cookie) cutter, then leave to rise for 20–30 minutes.

Heat the oil in a medium pan or deep-fat fryer to 180°C/350°F. Deep-fry the doughnuts in batches, making sure they don't stick together. Turn them around in the oil a couple of times and cook until golden. Remove the doughnuts from the oil and leave to rest for a few minutes on a wire rack placed over paper towels, so any excess oil can run off.

Spread the sugar out on a plate and roll the doughnuts in the sugar to coat. Serve while still warm.

DEEP-FRIED AND FILLED DOUGHNUTS

Berliininmunkit (Finland)
Berlinare / Berlinermunkar (Sweden)

These fried pastries are best eaten the day they are made and they can be filled with apple compote (page 523) raspberry jam (pages 510–11) or vanilla cream (page 533). Or anything else you find delicious and suitable in texture, even though it won't be traditional if you deviate...

When you meet older bakers, they can be very particular about the look of these doughnuts, which should have a marked waist where the oil has not browned the dough. This can only happen if the dough has just the right texture that makes it float high enough in the oil. A doughnut that's brown all around with no waist tastes different to one that looks the traditional way, and I do prefer the old-fashioned look. There is something to the textural contrast between brown and fried and slightly pale and doughy that's very appealing.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Rising time: 1 hour
Makes: about 20 doughnuts depending on size preference

250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) milk
125 g/4½ oz (1 stick) butter
20 g/¾ oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
4 tablespoons sugar
4 g/⅛ oz (⅔ teaspoon) salt
1 teaspoon finely ground cardamom seeds
1 egg
450 g/1 lb (3¾ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour, plus extra for dusting
80 g/3 oz (¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar or Cinnamon Sugar (page 535), to coat
1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) neutral cooking oil, for deep-frying or if you are more on the traditional side, rendered animal fat (page 538)
filling of your choice (see introduction above)

Heat the milk and the butter together in a pan until the butter has melted, then leave to cool until it is 37°C/98.6°F. Put the milk and butter mixture and the yeast into the bowl of a stand mixer and stir until the yeast is dissolved. Add the sugar, salt, cardamom, egg and flour and work with the dough hook until you have a shiny and elastic dough. Cover the bowl with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes, or until doubled in size.

Transfer the dough to a lightly floured work counter and cut into 20 equal-sized pieces. Shape them into tight round buns and leave to rise under a clean dish towel for another 30 minutes, or until just doubled in size.

Spread the sugar or cinnamon sugar out on a plate.

Heat the oil or animal fat in a deep pan to 180°C/350°F. Deep-fry the doughnuts until golden on the first side and then carefully flip with a fork. It should take a couple of minutes on each side. Leave on a baking sheet lined with kitchen paper to cool. It's important that you do not fry too many at a time. If you do, not only does the oil cool too much, it's also really difficult to get the right degree of colouration and the pale waist I described in the introduction. I like to think that I have black belt in deep-frying and I do no more than 4 at a time, regardless of whether I can fit more in my deep fryer or pan.

Coat the doughnuts in the sugar or cinnamon sugar and subsequently fill them with your desired filling using a piping (pastry) bag.

DANISH DOUGHNUTS

Munker (Norway)
Æbleskiver (Denmark)
Berlinermunkar / Danska munkar (Sweden)

The name of these doughnuts in Danish translates to 'apple slices' and refers to their origin as slices of apple that were coated in batter and fried. The *æbleskiver* of today, though, very rarely contain any apple. They are fluffy, somewhat pancake-like balls fried in an *æbleskiver* pan (see illustration right), sometimes sprinkled with icing (confectioners') sugar, sometimes with ordinary sugar and sometimes not sprinkled with anything at all.

Danish doughnuts are usually served with some jam (pages 510–11) to dip them in, and they are an important part of Danish Christmas traditions, often served alongside Mulled Wine (page 538–9).

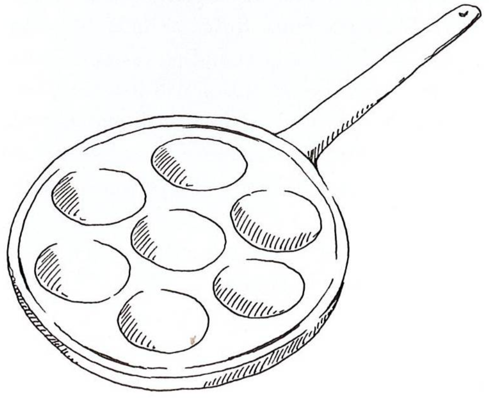
Some recipes include grated lemon zest for flavour; if you add that, do so into the warmed milk.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Rising time: 25 minutes
Makes: 20 doughnuts

100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, plus extra for frying
250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) milk
zest of 1 lemon (optional)
2 tablespoons sugar
pinch of salt
25 g/1 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
250 g/9 oz (1¾ cups plus 1 tablespoon) strong wheat flour
3 eggs
sugar or icing (confectioners') sugar, for sprinkling (optional)

Place the butter in a small pan and melt over low heat. Add the milk and heat to body temperature (37°C/98.6°F). Add the lemon zest (if using), sugar, salt and yeast to the warm mixture and stir to dissolve. Sift over the flour, then mix in with a very sturdy whisk to form a thick and very sticky batter. Stir in the eggs. Cover the bowl and leave the batter to rise for 25 minutes.

Place a buttered *æbleskiver* pan over a medium heat and spoon in dollops of batter. Fry until a deep golden brown, then flip the doughnuts over and cook on the other side.



DANISH DOUGHNUTS, VARIATION MADE WITH BAKING POWDER

Aebleskiver (Denmark)
Danska munkar (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 30 doughnuts

3 eggs
3 tablespoons sugar
250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) milk
200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) cream
zest of 1 lemon (optional)
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536), optional
1 teaspoon salt
250 g/9 oz (1¾ cups plus 1 tablespoon) strong wheat flour
2 tablespoons baking powder
butter, to grease

To serve
icing (confectioners') sugar
strawberry jam (pages 510–11), optional

Separate the egg yolks from the whites and put them into different bowls. Whisk the egg whites until they form a thick foam.

In the other bowl, mix the egg yolks, sugar, milk, cream, lemon zest and vanilla sugar, if using, and salt. Add the flour and baking powder, while stirring until no lumps remain.

Fold the egg whites into the egg yolk mixture, little by little. Do not stir too much as you want the dough to be quite fluffy. Butter an *aebleskiver* pan (see illustration page 305) and place over a medium heat. Spoon in dollops of batter and fry until deep golden brown, then flip the doughnuts over and fry the other side. Remove from the pan and keep warm while you fry the rest of the dough.

Serve sprinkled with icing (confectioners') sugar and/or with strawberry jam.

ICELANDIC DEEP-FRIED DOUGHNUT BALLS (LOVE BALLS)

Ástarpungar (Iceland)

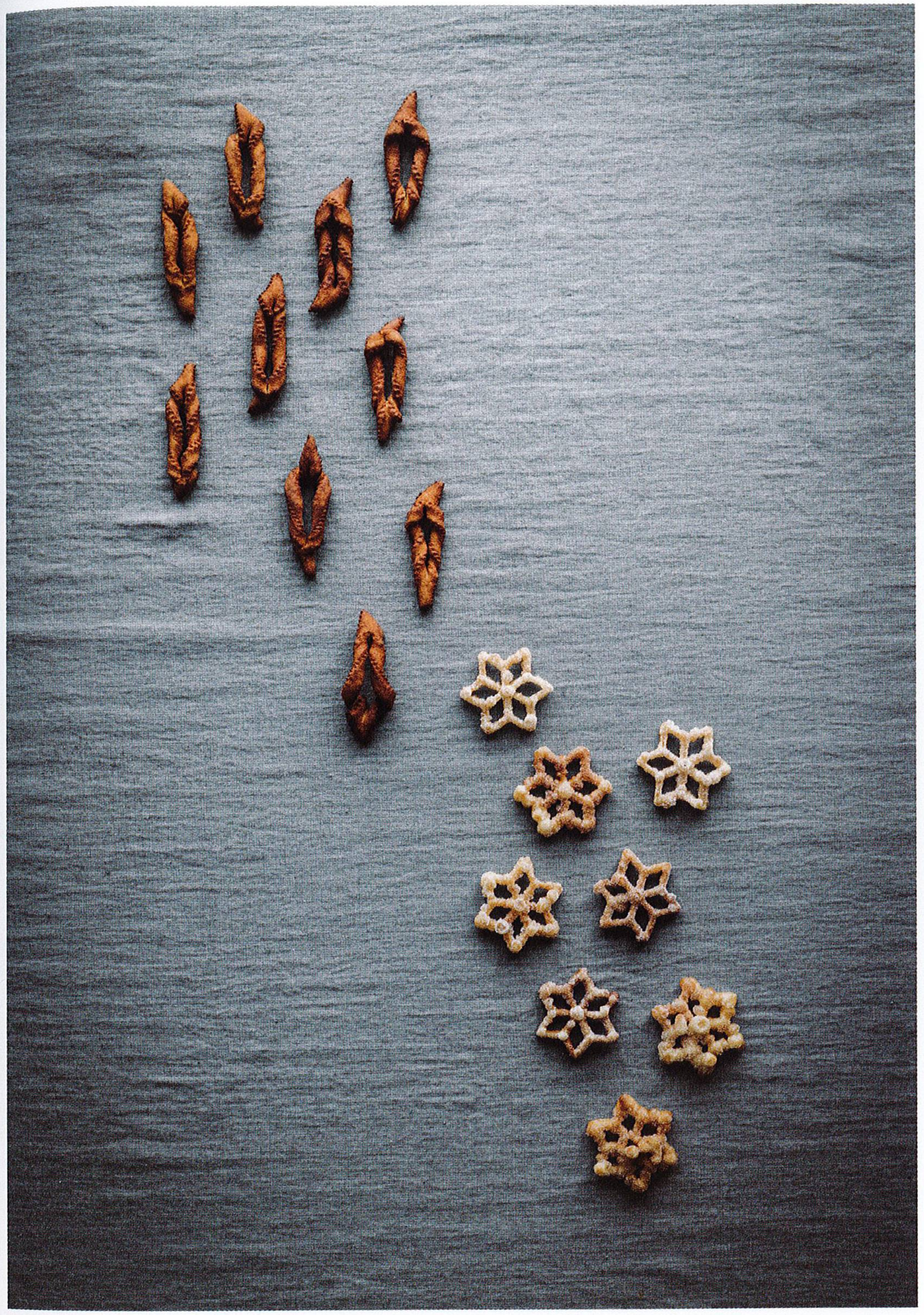
Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 20 doughnut balls

2 eggs
85 g/3 oz (¼ cup plus 2½ tablespoons) sugar
250 g/9 oz (2 cups plus 1 tablespoon) plain (all-purpose) flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
pinch of salt
125 ml/4 fl oz (½ cup) milk
1 teaspoon finely ground cardamom seeds, Vanilla Sugar (page 536) or lemon zest
100 g/3½ oz (¾ cup) raisins
neutral oil, for deep-frying

Whisk the eggs and sugar together in a bowl until fluffy and light. Sift the flour, baking powder and salt together onto the mix, then add the milk and the flavourings of your choice. Stir vigorously so that no lumps remain. Add the raisins and mix.

Heat the oil for deep-frying the balls in a deep, heavy pan or deep-fat fryer to 180°C/350°F.

Use 2 spoons to shape the batter into little balls, then carefully drop them straight into the hot oil. The balls should be about the size of a ping-pong ball; they will inflate further when cooked. You can cook about 4 doughnuts at the same time, but make sure that they don't stick to each other. Turn them around in the oil a couple of times and cook until golden. Remove the doughnuts from the oil and leave to rest for a few minutes on paper towels to absorb any excess oil. Eat while still lukewarm.



Top to bottom: Crullers (page 308); Rosettes (page 310)

CRULLERS

Kleynur (Faroe Islands)
Kleina (Iceland)
Fattigmann (Norway)
Klejner (Denmark)
Klenäter (Sweden)

Crullers are deep-fried, knot-shaped pastries popular all over the Nordic region, but perhaps especially in southern Sweden and Denmark. For many people, they are an essential part of the Christmas celebrations. They have been baked at least since the sixteenth century in Sweden and the name itself comes from the Swedish word for a precious object, *klenod*.

Crullers are often flavoured with Cognac, lemon juice, *Ättika* vinegar (page 540) or in some cases, cardamom. They were traditionally fried in a mixture of lard and tallow called *flottyr* (page 538) and in Iceland, in sheep's tallow. Today, crullers are most often fried in some kind of flavourless, vegetable-based fat, suitable for deep-frying.

After cooking, the individual pastries are sometimes covered in icing (confectioners') sugar, plain sugar or cinnamon sugar (page 535) and served on their own with coffee, as a snack, or with whipped cream and jam (pages 510–11) as a dessert. The latter is more common in Sweden. In the other Nordic countries crullers are usually just eaten on their own, and the crullers themselves are most often flavoured with cardamom.

These pastries can be unleavened or leavened with baking powder, bicarbonate of soda (baking soda) or baker's ammonia. Older recipes are often unleavened or can even be leavened with yeast. I have included recipes for both unleavened and leavened crullers.

For image see page 307

UNLEAVENED CRULLERS
(VERSION 1)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Resting time: 1 hour
Makes: 40 crullers

50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
4 tablespoons icing (confectioners') sugar
4 egg yolks
150 g/5 oz (1¼ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
neutral fat or oil, for deep-frying

Your choice from the following flavourings
1 tablespoon Cognac and zest of 1 lemon
1 tablespoon lemon juice and zest of 1 lemon
1 tablespoon *Ättika* (12%) vinegar (page 540) and/or 1 teaspoon finely ground cardamom seeds

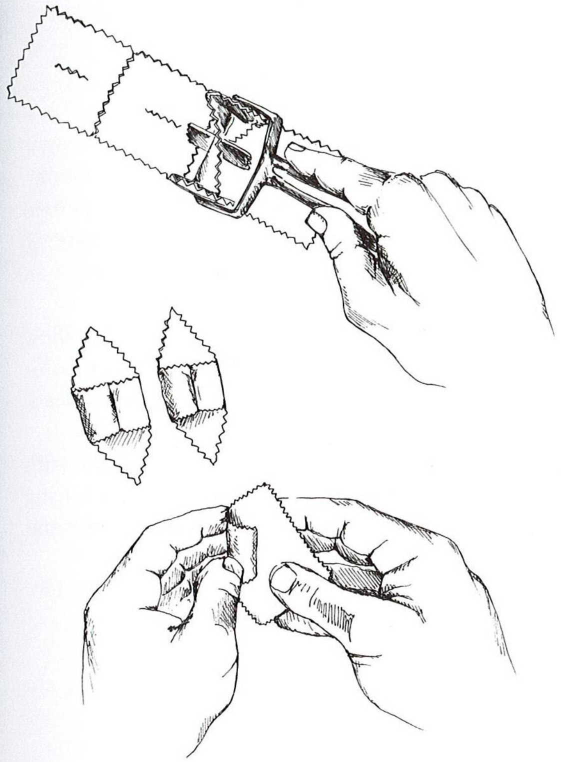
Beat the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl until white. Add the egg yolks, one at a time, making sure each is fully incorporated before you add the next. Stir in your choice of flavouring, then sift the flour into the bowl. Work the dough with your hand until fully combined and smooth.

Shape the dough into a ball, wrap in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

Roll the dough out on a lightly floured work counter to a thickness of about 3 mm/⅛ inch. Use a special cruller cutter (or a sharp knife) to cut the dough into 40 strips, each about 3 x 10 cm/1¼ x 4 inches. If you are not using the cruller cutter you also have to make a slit along the length of each strip. The specialized cutter not only portions the dough perfectly, but it also makes this incision for you.

Form each strip into the traditional cruller shape by pulling the ends over and through the slit, creating a sort of inside-out knot.

Heat the fat or oil in a medium pan or deep-fryer to 180°C/350°F. Deep-fry the crullers until golden on both sides. Remove the crullers from the oil and leave to cool for a few minutes on a wire rack or paper towels to absorb any excess oil.



LEAVENED CRULLERS
(VERSION 2)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Resting time: 1 hour
Makes: 40 crullers

40 g/1½ oz (3 tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
75 g/2¾ oz (⅓ cup plus ½ tablespoon) sugar
1 egg
50 ml/2 fl oz (3½ tablespoons) cultured milk
250 g/9 oz (2 cups plus 1 tablespoon) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
1 teaspoon baker's ammonia
1 teaspoon baking powder
neutral fat or oil, for deep-frying

Your choice from the following flavourings
1 tablespoon Cognac and grated zest of 1 lemon, or 1 tablespoon lemon juice and grated zest of 1 lemon, or 1 tablespoon *Ättika* (12%) vinegar (page 540) and/or 1 teaspoon finely ground cardamom seeds

Follow the method described left, for unleavened crullers. Add the cultured milk to the mixture after adding the egg and sift the baker's ammonia and baking powder into the bowl with the flour.

ROSETTES

Rosettebakkels (Norway)
Struvor (Sweden)

Rosettes are star-shaped, deep-fried pastries commonly served around Christmas. They are traditionally made with a special *struvor* iron, which is first preheated in hot oil before being dipped into batter and returned to the hot oil. As it fries in the hot oil, the pastry falls away from the iron in a pretty shape.

Preparation and cooking time: 40 minutes
Resting time: 20 minutes
Makes: 10 rosettes

130 g/4½ oz (1 cup plus 1 tablespoon)
  weak (soft) wheat flour
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon)
  milk
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon)
  cream
1 egg
1 tablespoon sugar
fat or oil, for deep-frying (most people use
  coconut oil)
sugar or icing (confectioners') sugar,
  to serve (optional)

Whisk all the ingredients together (except the cooking oil) to make a smooth batter. Leave to rest for about 20 minutes.

Heat the fat or oil in a deep pot to 180°C/350°F. Keep the batter close to the stove top. Preheat the *struvor* iron in the hot oil. Dip it into the batter briefly, then return to the oil straight away. After a few seconds the rosette will loosen on the iron and you can shake it off into the oil. Repeat with more batter.

Deep-fry the rosettes for a couple of minutes, turning them around in the oil so they colour evenly. Remove from the oil and rest briefly on paper towels to absorb any excess oil. Either leave plain or dust the rosettes with sugar while warm and serve at room temperature.

For image see page 307

FINNISH MAY DAY FUNNEL CAKES

Tippaleipä / Struvor (Finland)
Struvor (Sweden)

These funnel cakes are most often dusted with icing (confectioners') sugar after they are deep-fried and then enjoyed with a glass of *sima* (a type of mead) for the Finnish May Day celebrations.

Old recipes use a combination of lard and tallow (*flottyr*, page 538) but most new ones use some kind of vegetable-based cooking fat or oil instead.

Some people have their *tippaleipä* dusted with plain icing (confectioners') sugar, some with icing sugar mixed with Vanilla Sugar (page 536) and others with Cinnamon Sugar (page 535).

Preparation and cooking time: 30–45 minutes
Makes: 10 cakes

3 eggs
1 tablespoon sugar
good pinch of salt
zest of 1 lemon
150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) milk
350 g/12 oz (3 cups) weak (soft)
  wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
fat or oil, for deep-frying

Whisk the eggs with the sugar until pale and creamy. Add the salt (the batter should be quite salty for a pastry), lemon zest and milk and stir until fully incorporated. Sift the flour and baking powder together into the bowl and mix again until smooth.

Heat the fat or oil in a deep, medium pot to 180°C/350°F.

Spoon the batter into a piping (pastry) bag fitted with a 3-mm/⅛-inch nozzle. (If you want to go all traditional, you can pour the batter through a funnel, but this way is about a thousand times easier.)

Pipe the batter into the hot fat or oil, working in a swirling motion. You are aiming to create intersecting concentric rings, about 8 cm/3 inches at the bottom, and building up to create a kind of tall, bird's nest shape. Deep-fry for a few minutes, flipping the cakes over once in the oil, until they are golden brown all over. Drain on a wire rack, then transfer to a baking sheet lined with paper towels to remove excess fat. Repeat with the remaining batter.

Let the cakes cool slightly. Dust with icing (confectioners') sugar, either plain, or mixed with your choice of flavoured sugar, to taste.

DEEP-FRIED SWEET PASTY FROM SAVONLINNA (NYSLOTT)

Lörtsy (Finland)

This is a sweet version of the savoury original (page 211). It's filled with Apple Compote (page 523).

Preparation and cooking time: 50 minutes
Resting time: 1 hour
Makes: 20 pasties

Egg Wash (pages 73–4)
2 litres/68 fl oz (8½ cups) fat or oil,
  for deep-frying
1 quantity Apple Compote (page 523)

For the dough
25 g/1 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons)
  milk, at body temperature (37°C/98.6°F)
2 teaspoons salt
2 tablespoons sugar
2 eggs
900 g/2 lb (7½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
75 g/2¾ oz (5 tablespoons) butter, melted

Add the yeast and milk to the bowl of a stand mixer and stir until the yeast is dissolved. Add the remaining ingredients and work the dough with the dough hook for about 10 minutes until it is elastic and comes cleanly away from the s the bowl. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for about 40 minutes, or until it has doubled in size.

Line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Scrape the dough out onto a work counter and cut it into 20 pieces. Roll each one into a ball before rolling them out into a round, 5 mm/¼ inch thick. Brush each round with a thin coating of egg wash, place a spoonful of the filling onto each round and fold them together into half moon shaped parcels. Crimp the edges carefully together to seal. The egg acts like glue.

Place the parcels on the prepared baking sheet, cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 20 minutes.

Heat the oil in a deep, medium pot to 190°C/375°F. Deep-fry a few parcels at a time until deeply golden, then leave them to rest for a while on a wire rack before eating.

SHORT PASTRIES AND COOKIES

Previous page: View from close to where I live, Sweden, late autumn (fall) 2015.

Opposite: This photo was taken at Copenhagen's Tivoli amusement park. A young Danish woman watches longingly at a batch of flødeboll (page 328) being made, the carousel reflected in the window, Denmark, late winter 2013.

Spangsberg
CHOKOLADE

In Scandinavia we love cookies and they are an integral part of *fika* (pages 44–9). Their popularity and the sheer volume of recipes makes this particular chapter one of the largest in this book. Most are based on some type of short pastry base and can appear simple to make when reading the recipe, but don't be deceived, as they are some of the most complicated pastries to get just right, and take years of practice to perfect. One tip when you make these is not to make them too big. Cookies in the Nordics are not supposed to be large, even if the current trend – no doubt propelled by influence from other countries with the tradition of making more substantial individual pastries – heads towards them growing in size. Most of the cookies in this chapter are traditional, and they are supposed to be just one bite or two, and at the most three nibbles. You are meant to be able to eat more than one kind when you have *fika*, which I think is a lot nicer than just chewing on the same old cookie from the beginning of your coffee break to the end of it.

In Sweden, from the mid-nineteenth century almost until today, seven kinds of cookies (excluding buns and cake, of course) was considered a perfect number to serve your guests if you had friends or family coming over for coffee. Any less could be considered a sign of laziness or lack of generosity, and more was simply braggy (a cardinal sin in Sweden). Both of my grandmothers at any time had seven cookies ready to go in various tins in their cupboards. I think perhaps they were part of the last generation to feel strongly about this old custom. The term, '*sju sorters kakor*', meaning 'seven kinds of cookies' became so emblematic over the years that it led to the creation of one of Sweden's most important cookbooks, *Sju Sorters Kakor*. Published in 1945, it is still in print and very much a valid part of Scandinavian baking culture having sold more than 3.5 million copies.

SHORTBREAD, BASIC RECIPE

Mördeg (Sweden)

This is one of the most versatile sweet dough recipes that can be used for anything from cookies to a pie crust. Work it as little as possible to ensure a short friable texture and allow for proper resting time in the refrigerator. This recipe freezes very well so if you don't need all of the dough immediately, wrap it tightly in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and keep in the freezer until you do.

Preparation and cooking time: 10 minutes
Resting time: 1 hour

200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, cut into 1-cm/½-inch dice
85 g/3 oz (¼ cup plus 2½ tablespoons) sugar
270 g/9½ oz (2¼ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)

Put all of the ingredients into a food processor fitted with the knife blade attachment and pulse until just combined but still a bit crumbly. Transfer the contents of the bowl to a sheet of clingfilm (plastic wrap) and press it into a firm lump of dough using your hands. Wrap the clingfilm over and around the dough and squeeze out any air. Leave to rest in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour before using.

DOUGLAS' SHORTBREAD COOKIES

Dogges Syltkakor (Sweden)

One of the first chefs to be employed at my restaurant Fäviken was Douglas, who started making these cookies from an old recipe given to him by his grandmother. When Douglas left us to take on another challenge, we continued baking the cookies. There is always a batch on the go somewhere at Fäviken. They are served daily as a snack.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 20 cookies

500 g/1 lb 2 oz (4 cups plus 2 tablespoons) plain (all-purpose) flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
220 g/7¾ oz (1 cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
300 g/11 oz (2½ sticks plus 1 tablespoon) butter, at room temperature
2 eggs, at room temperature
your choice of jam (pages 510–11), I like raspberry and cloudberry best

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Knead all the dry ingredients together with the butter in a bowl until well mixed. Lightly beat the eggs, add them to the mixture and work until smooth, taking care not to overwork the dough.

Shape the dough into 20 little balls with your hands and place on the prepared baking sheet. Make an indentation in each one with your finger and fill the indentation with jam.

Bake in the oven for about 10 minutes, or until golden brown. Eat the cookies as soon as they are cool enough, to enjoy them at their best.

PEASANT SHORTBREAD COOKIES

Bondkakor (Sweden)

This is one of the real Swedish classics. If I were to pick my own selection of seven cookies (*sju sorters kakor*, page 317) this would be one of them, for sure. When you see these in bakeries and cafes, quite often they are a little too delicate in texture – they should be very dense, almost a bit hard to bite through. This recipe makes quite a few cookies, but if you are not going to finish eating them all in one go, freeze half of the dough before baking and then defrost it to cook it another time.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Resting time: a few hours or overnight
Makes: 60–80 cookies

200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, at room temperature
200 g/7 oz (1 cup) sugar
120 g/4 oz (⅓ cup) golden syrup
250 g/9 oz (2 cups) plain (all-purpose) flour, plus extra for dusting
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)
150 g/5 oz (1 cup plus 1 tablespoon) almonds with the skin still on, coarsely chopped

Put the butter, sugar and golden syrup into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and work until combined. Add the dry ingredients and work until it is a smooth dough.

Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and divide it into 4 equal pieces. Roll the pieces into logs of about 4 cm/1½ inches in diameter and wrap each one tightly in clingfilm (plastic wrap). Leave in the refrigerator for a few hours until firm. If you are not in a rush you may as well leave it overnight, as this makes the next step easier.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line several baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Cut the logs into 5-mm/¼-inch thick slices and place the slices onto the prepared baking sheets. Bake for about 10 minutes, or until just golden. Remove from the oven and leave them to cool.

For image see page 325

SLIGHTLY CHEWY CUT CARAMEL SHORTBREADS

Kolakakor / Kolasnittar (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: about 20 shortbreads

100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, soft
90 g/3¼ oz (⅓ cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
50 g/2 oz (2 tablespoons) golden syrup
150 g/5 oz (1¼ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)
1 teaspoon ground ginger
good pinch of salt

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Beat the butter, sugar and syrup together in a bowl until light in colour. Add the flour, bicarbonate of soda (baking soda) and ginger by sifting them into the bowl. Beat again until fully combined.

Shape the dough into 2 logs a bit shorter than the width of your baking sheet. Place the logs on the prepared baking sheets and bake for about 15 minutes or until golden. The logs will spread out considerably during the cooking.

Let the logs cool down a little, but before they go hard and crisp, take them off the baking sheets and onto a chopping (cutting) board. Cut straight across in ribbons about 3 cm/1¼ inch in width and leave them to cool.

For image see page 321

FORKED SHORTBREADS

Gaffelkakor (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 50 shortbreads

200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, at room temperature
4 tablespoons sugar
50 g/2 oz (½ cup) rolled oats
180 g/6½ oz (1½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Place the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and mix on medium speed until pale and fluffy. Add the oats and flour and mix until well combined.

Divide the dough into 50 equal pieces and roll them into small balls. Place them on the prepared baking sheets and press each one with a fork to flatten them and make a pattern.

Bake for 10 minutes, then remove from the oven and leave them to cool.

CUT ALMOND SHORTBREADS ROLLED IN SUGAR

Håkonskaker (Norway)
Håkonskager (Denmark)
Håkonkakor (Sweden)

Håkon is the name of a whole bunch of Norwegian kings. I don't know, and neither does it seem possible to figure out exactly why, this cookie is named after them. It is, however, very popular in both Norway and Denmark, perhaps actually even more so in Denmark, especially around Christmas time.

Preparation and cooking time: 35–40 minutes
Resting time: overnight
Makes: 50 shortbreads

For the short pastry
200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, soft
90 g/3½ oz (¾ cup) icing (confectioners') sugar
75 g/2¾ oz Almond Paste, grated (page 531)
2 teaspoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
250 g/9 oz (2 cups) plain (all-purpose) flour

For coating
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)

Put the butter, icing (confectioners') sugar, almond paste and vanilla sugar into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and work until smooth. Add the flour and work until it is just combined. Shape the dough into a log about 4 cm/1½ inches in diameter, wrap in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave in the refrigerator overnight.

The next day, preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Spread the sugar out on a plate. Unwrap the log and brush all over with the egg wash, then roll it in the sugar to coat. Cut it into 5-mm/¼-inch thick slices and place the slices on the prepared baking sheet. Bake for 10–15 minutes, or until light golden. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

For image see page opposite

SHORTBREAD COOKIES WITH MERINGUE FILLING

Jitterbuggare (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Resting time: 1 hour
Makes: 50 cookies

For the dough
270 g/9½ oz (2¼ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
90 g/3¼ oz (⅓ cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, cold and diced
1 egg yolk

For the filling
2 egg whites
90 g/3¼ oz (⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar

Put all the ingredients for the dough into a food processor fitted with the knife blade attachment and process until well combined. Wrap the dough in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave it in the refrigerator for 45 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Make the meringue filling by whisking the egg whites to a thick foam in a spotlessly clean, dry bowl, either by hand or using a stand mixer. Continue whisking while you add the sugar, little by little.

Unwrap the dough and place on a work counter and roll it out to a rectangular shape, 5 mm/¼ inch thick. Spread the meringue filling over the dough and roll it up into a log, starting at the long side closest to you. Leave the log in the refrigerator for 15 minutes. It will make it easier to cut it.

Slice the log into 1-cm/½-inch thick slices and place them on the prepared baking sheets. Bake for 12–14 minutes, or until light golden. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

For image see page 341

Clockwise from top left: Oat Cookies with Raisins (page 329); Cinamon Shortbreads (page 322); Rye Shortbreads (page 322); Cat's Tongue Cookies (page 343); Cut Almond Shortbreads Rolled in Sugar (page 320); Slightly Chewy Caramel Shortbreads (page 319)

SHORTBREAD COOKIES WITH PINK SUGAR

Brysselkex (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Resting time: 1½ hours
Makes: 30–50 cookies

For the dough
200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, cold and diced
90 g/3¼ oz (⅓ cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
280 g/10 oz (2⅓ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour

To decorate
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar
2–3 drops red food colouring

Put all the ingredients for the dough into a food processor fitted with the knife blade attachment and process until combined. Wrap the dough in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave it in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.

Prepare the sugar for the decoration by colouring it with the red food colouring.

Unwrap the dough and place on a work counter and roll it out into a tight log, about 4 cm/1½ inches in diameter. Roll the log in the coloured sugar and then cover it with clingfilm and leave it in the refrigerator for another hour.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Cut the log into 1-cm/½-inch thick slices and place them on the prepared baking sheets. Bake for 8 minutes. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

CINNAMON SHORTBREADS

Kanelkakor (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Resting time: 2 hours
Makes: about 50 shortbreads

For the dough
300 g/11 oz (2½ cups) weak (soft)
wheat flour
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar
200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter

For the topping
60 g/2¼ oz (¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon) sugar
1 tablespoon ground cassia cinnamon
1 egg white, beaten

Place all of the ingredients for the dough in a food processor fitted with the knife blade attachment and process until well combined. Wrap the dough in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave it in the refrigerator for 2 hours.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Mix the sugar and cinnamon for the topping together in a small bowl.

Unwrap the dough and place on a work counter. Roll it out to about 3 mm/⅛ inch thick. Using a cookie cutter, cut out about 50 cookies (depending on size). Place them on the prepared baking sheets, brushwith the beaten egg white and sprinkle the sugar and cinnamon mixture on top. Bake for 8–10 minutes. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

For image see page 321

RYE SHORTBREADS

Torplyckor (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: about 50 shortbreads

180 g/6½ oz (1½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
55 g/2 oz (½ cup) rye flour
150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons)
butter, cold and diced
90 g/3¼ oz (⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
1½ teaspoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536)

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Put all of the ingredients into a food processor fitted with the knife blade attachment and process until well combined.

Tip the dough out onto a work counter, divide it in half and roll each half out into a log, about the thickness of a finger. Cut the logs into 5-cm/2-inch long pieces and press a fork down into each piece, creating a pattern.

Place the cookies on the prepared baking sheets and bake for 12 minutes. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

For image see page 321

BRANDY SHORTBREAD WREATHS

Konjakskransar (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Resting time: 30 minutes
Makes: 50 shortbreads wreaths

300 g/11 oz (2½ cups) weak (soft) wheat
flour
200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, cold and diced
90 g/3¼ oz (⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
2 tablespoons brandy

Place the flour, butter and sugar in a food processor fitted with the knife blade attachment and process until combined. Add the brandy, little by little, while processing until you have a well combined, firm dough. Wrap the dough in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave it in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Unwrap the dough and place on a work counter. Divide it into 10 equal pieces and roll out each piece to a very thin string 3–4 mm/⅛–¼ inch thick. Place the strings 2 and 2 next to each other, twist them (still only 2 and 2) to form a short pastry twine. You will end up with 5 twines each made of 2 strings. Cut each twine into 12-cm/4½-inch long pieces. Shape each piece into a ring by joining the ends together and place them on the prepared baking sheets. Bake for 10 minutes. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

For image see page 341

DREAMS

Drömmar (Sweden)

These Swedish cookies are called 'dreams'. They have a very fragile and unique texture achieved by the addition of baker's ammonia, a leavening agent the non-Swedish chefs working at my restaurant usually refer to as 'piss salt' because of how it smells when the cookies are being baked. The good thing is that the nightclub urinal touch given by the baker's ammonia vents off in a matter of minutes when the cookies are cooling down.

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Makes: about 20 cookies

100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, soft
90 g/3¼ oz (⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
160 g/5½ oz (1⅓ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
½ teaspoon baker's ammonia
small pinch of salt

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Beat the butter, sugar and vanilla sugar in a bowl until light in colour. Sift the flour and baker's ammonia together into the bowl and beat again, this time until fully combined but not longer.

Shape the dough into 20 little balls and place them on the prepared baking sheet. Bake for about 15 minutes. The cookies should have no, or very little, colouration and they should break up slightly during the cooking. Do not touch the cookies until they have completely cooled down as they are very fragile when still warm.

COCONUT DREAMS

Kokosdrömmar (Sweden)

This is a variation of the classic Swedish dream cookie (page 323) with the addition of desiccated coconut, which makes these cookies sort of marginally healthier than the original, I suppose. They are also a little denser because of the coconut and will brown a little bit more than the very blonde original dreams.

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Makes: 50 cookies

100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
250 g/9 oz (1¼ cups) sugar
2 teaspoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) neutral cooking oil, at room temperature
140 g/4¾ oz (2¾ cups) desiccated coconut
185 g/6½ oz (1½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 teaspoon baker's ammonia

Preheat the oven to 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 3 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Place the butter, sugar and vanilla sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and stir until fully mixed. Add the oil, little by little, stirring at medium speed, and make sure that the batter does not split. Add the desiccated coconut, flour and baker's ammonia together and mix until everything is just incorporated.

Using your hands, shape the dough into 50 round balls and place them on the prepared baking sheets. Bake for 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and leave them to cool.

For image see page opposite

COCONUT PYRAMIDS

Kokostopper (Denmark)
Kokostoppar (Sweden)

These pastries don't have to be shaped like pyramids, I just like them that way. It works just as well to simply spoon them out onto the paper in rough piles before cooking them.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: about 20 pyramids

2 eggs
90 g/3¼ oz (⅓ cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
200 g/7 oz (2⅔ cups) desiccated coconut
good pinch of salt
75 g/2¾ oz (5 tablespoons) butter, melted and cooled to room temperature

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Put the eggs and sugar in a bowl and whisk until mixed. Add the desiccated coconut, salt and the butter and stir until fully combined. Let the batter sit for 20 minutes so that the coconut can absorb a bit of moisture and swell, this makes shaping the pyramids considerably easier.

Spoon 20 piles of the mixture onto the prepared baking sheet and shape them into pyramid shapes using your hands or a spatula. Bake for 10–15 minutes. They should be golden on the edges of the pyramid but blonde on the flat sides. Coconut pyramids go dry if overcooked. Remove from the oven and leave them to cool.

For image see page opposite

Clockwise from top left: Coconut Pyramids (page 324); Finnish Sticks (page 326); Coconut Dreams (page 324); Chocolate Cuts (page 326); Peasant Shortbread Cookies (page 318); Shortbread Cookies with Lemon Vanilla Filling / M-Cakes (page 330)

FINNISH STICKS

Finsk breud (Faroe Islands)
Finskbrød (Denmark)
Finska pinnar (Sweden)

This iconic Swedish shortbread called *finsk pinnar*, is a kind of enigma. My guy in Finland, Kenneth Nars, assures me that it does not exist over there and that there is no other pastry similar to it that the name could refer to. As a matter of fact, I have not been able to find out exactly why it is called what it is called. Anyhow, it is one of Sweden's most loved and classic cookies, delicately flavoured with bitter almonds.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Resting time: 1 hour
Makes: about 25 sticks

3 bitter almonds, finely grated
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, soft
50 g/2 oz (¼ cup) sugar
150 g/5 oz (1¼ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)
1 tablespoon pearl sugar
25 g/1 oz (3 tablespoons) sweet almonds, coarsely chopped

Combine the bitter almonds, butter, sugar and flour in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the knife blade attachment. Process until just combined. Shape the dough into a ball, wrap in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Unwrap the dough and roll it into 2 logs about 2 cm/¾ inch in thickness. Brush each log lightly with the egg wash and sprinkle with pearl sugar and chopped almonds. Cut the logs into 5 cm/2 inch pieces and transfer them to the prepared baking sheet. Bake them for 10–12 minutes. They shouldn't colour too much.

Let the sticks cool before trying to pick them up, as they are fragile when warm.

For image see page 325

CHOCOLATE CUTS

Chokladsnittar (Sweden)

These cookies can be found with or without a sprinkling of pearl sugar on them. I tend to prefer the ones with pearl sugar, as I like the texture of it. A handful of the stuff sprinkled on top of the loaves before baking and patted lightly to make them stick will do it if you are like me.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 40–60 cookies

220 g/7¾ oz (1 cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, at room temperature
300 g/11 oz (2½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
6 tablespoons cocoa powder
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 tablespoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)

To decorate
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)
pearl sugar, to taste (optional)

Place the sugar and butter in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and stir until pale and fluffy. Add the remaining dry ingredients by sifting them together into the bowl. Work until just combined. Don't overwork the dough or you will get a poor texture.

Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and divide it into 4 equal pieces. Roll each piece out into a roll, about 3 cm/1¼ inches in diameter and place them on the prepared baking sheets, 2 rolls on each sheet as they will spread out a little. Press each roll down lightly to flatten it slightly.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Brush each roll lightly with egg wash and sprinkle with pearl sugar, if you like. Bake them for about 12 minutes. They should not get any real colour from baking but still need to be cooked through and not to become chewy. They should fluff up and crack a bit during baking.

Remove from the oven and leave the hot and slightly flattened rolls to cool down a little. When they are still warm and starting to firm up, use a sharp knife to cut diagonally across the rolls into pieces. Leave to cool completely.

For image see page 325

CHESSBOARD COOKIES

Schackrutor (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Resting time: 30 minutes
Makes: 50 cookies

200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, cold and diced
300 g/11 oz (2½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
90 g/3¼ oz (⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
2 teaspoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
2 tablespoons cocoa powder

Put the butter, flour and ordinary sugar into a food processor fitted with the knife blade attachment and process until just combined.

Divide the dough in half and mix one half with the vanilla sugar and the other half with the cocoa powder. Roll the dough out into 4 equal-sized logs. Try to make them square either by pressing the sides towards the work counter or using a flat object like a tray. Place one light log next to a dark one in 2 layers. Press them together a little so that they lie close together. Wrap in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Unwrap the dough and place on the work counter. Cut into 50 slices about 5 mm/¼ inch thick. Place the slices on the prepared baking sheets and bake for 10 minutes. Remove from the oven and leave them to cool.

For image see page 341

CHOCOLATE CIGARS

Chokladcigarrer (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 50 cigars

175 g/6 oz (1½ sticks) butter, at room temperature
90 g/3¼ oz (⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
125 g/4½ oz (1¼ cups) ground hazelnuts or hazelnut flour
180 g/6½ oz (1½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 tablespoons cream
75 g/2¾ oz milk or dark (semisweet) chocolate

Place the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and mix at medium speed until soft and well combined. Add the ground hazelnuts or hazelnut flour and wheat flour while you keep mixing. Finish by adding the cream and mix until well combined.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Tip the dough out onto the work counter, divide it in 3–4 pieces and roll each piece into a log, about the thickness of a finger. Cut each log into 5-cm/2-inch pieces and place them on the prepared baking sheets.

Bake for 12 minutes, then remove from the oven and leave to cool before dipping them in chocolate.

Temper the chocolate by following the instructions on pages 78–83. Dip one end of each cookie in the chocolate to cover about a quarter of the cookie. Put the cookies back on the baking sheets and place in the refrigerator until the chocolate has set.

MERINGUE CREAM PUFFS

Flødeboll (Denmark)
Gräddbullar / Skumbollar (Sweden)

The first pastry consisting of a fluffy marshmallow-like substance piped on to of some kind of cookie or cracker before being coated with chocolate, was created in Denmark in the early nineteenth century. It is called *flødeboll* in Danish, meaning something like 'cream puff', probably indicating that at some point they actually contained dairy even though today they are made from egg whites, sugar and some gelling agent.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Chilling time: 1–2 hours
Makes: 40 cream puffs

40 thin wafers, round or square
 but not the flavoured ones
400 g/14 oz dark (semisweet) chocolate
1 teaspoon vegetable cooking oil
desiccated coconut, for rolling (optional)

For the meringue
360 g/12 oz (1¾ cups plus 1 tablespoon) sugar
3 tablespoons icing (confectioners') sugar
1 egg white
1½ tablespoons gelatine powder
1 tablespoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)

To make the meringue, put the sugar, icing (confectioners') sugar, egg white and 150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) cold water into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment.

In another small bowl, mix the gelatine powder with 150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) freshly boiled water and stir until the gelatine has dissolved.

Start beating the egg white and sugar mixture in the stand mixer, and at the same time, slowly pour in the warm gelatine mix. Continue beating until you get a really fluffy meringue. Add the vanilla sugar just before you finish beating.

If you are using square wafers, use a glass or something else to make round shaped ones. Spoon the meringue into a piping (pastry) bag fitted with a nozzle and pipe onto the wafers, covering the entire wafer and making a high cone. Leave the puffs in the freezer for 1–2 hours. This makes it easier to dip them in the chocolate later.

Temper the chocolate following the instructions on pages 78–83. Let the oil drip down into the chocolate while stirring. Remove the cream puffs from the freezer and dip them, one by one, into the melted chocolate. Sprinkle with desiccated coconut, if using, then leave them to set at room temperature.

CUT OAT COOKIES

Havresnittar (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: about 40 cookies

150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons)
 butter, soft
125 g/4½ oz (½ cup plus 2 tablespoons)
 sugar
75 g/2¾ oz (¾ cup) rolled oats
75 g/2¾ oz (½ cup plus 2 tablespoons) weak
 (soft) wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Place the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, add 1 teaspoon water and stir until the mixture is a little fluffy. Add the remaining ingredients and work until just combined.

Shape the dough into 2 logs and place them on the prepared baking sheets. Flatten them slightly as they will flatten and spread out quite a bit in the oven. Bake until just golden. Remove from the oven and leave to cool a little but not completely before cutting diagonally across the now completely flat and considerably wider logs.

OAT COOKIES WITH RAISINS

Havrekakor med russin (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 50 cookies

180 g/6½ oz (1¾ cups) rolled oats
250 g/9 oz (1¼ cups) sugar
120 g/4 oz (1 cup) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 tablespoons baking powder
200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter
120 g/4 oz (¾ cup) raisins

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Put all of the ingredients, except the raisins, into a food processor fitted with the knife blade attachment and process until combined. Stir the raisins into the dough by hand so that they don't break up too much.

Divide the dough into 50 equal pieces and roll into small balls. Place them on the prepared baking sheets and bake for 12 minutes. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

For image see page 321

CURRANT COOKIES

Korintkakor (Sweden)

Don't overbake these cookies; they should be just done but have hardly any colour. If they do colour, the currants (Corinthian raisins) will caramelize, which destroys everything.

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Makes: 40 cookies

85 g/3 oz (⅓ cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, at room
 temperature
250 g/9 oz (2 cups) plain (all-purpose) flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
50 g/2 oz (⅓ cup) currants (Corinthian raisins)

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Place the sugar and butter in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and stir until well mixed and a little fluffy. Add the flour, baking powder and currants (Corinthian raisins) and mix, just until fully combined. Do not overwork the dough as this will ruin the texture and break the currants up into the batter.

Divide the dough into 40 equal pieces and shape into balls. Place the balls on the prepared baking sheets and press each one with a fork to flatten and make a pattern.

Bake for 8–10 minutes. Remove from the oven and leave to cool completely.

ALMOND COOKIES

Mandelbiskvier (Sweden)

These are great as a little snack with coffee or, more commonly, as sweet croutons in sweet soups (pages 520–23).

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 80–150 cookies, depending on size

275 g/9¾ oz Almond Paste (page 531) at
 room temperature
1 egg white

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Grate the almond paste on the coarse side of a box grater into a bowl. Mix with the egg white with a stiff whisk until there are no lumps remaining and it is a smooth but firm batter.

Scrape the batter into a piping (pastry) bag fitted with a round nozzle and pipe 2-cm/¾-inch mounds onto the prepared baking sheet. Bake until golden. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

SHORTBREAD COOKIES WITH LEMON VANILLA FILLING / M-CAKES

M-kakor (Swedish)

This is my grandmother's recipe for my favourite childhood cookie. It says in the original recipe that she was given it by her friend Runa in 1989.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Resting time: about 30 minutes
Makes: 20

For the dough
300 g/11 oz (7 tablespoons) butter, cold and cut into 1 cm/½ inch dice
90 g/3¼ oz (¾ cup) icing (confectioners') sugar
3 teaspoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
180 g/6 oz (1½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
240 g/8½ oz (1½ cups) potato starch

For the filling
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, soft
120 g/4 oz (1 cup) icing (confectioners') sugar
3 teaspoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
1 egg yolk
zest of 1 lemon

Place the ingredients for the dough in a food processor and pulse until combined. Transfer the dough to a work counter and shape it into logs 3 cm/1¼ inch in diameter. Wrap in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave to firm up in the fridge.

Preheat the oven to 175C/345F/Gas Mark 4 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Cut the logs into 1 cm/½ inch slices and place on the prepared baking sheets. Bake for 10 minutes, or until very lightly golden. Leave to cool on the baking sheet

Meanwhile, place the ingredients for the filling in a bowl and stir until smooth. Transfer to a piping (pastry) bag, pipe some on the underside of a cookie and top with another cookie. Squeeze the two together. Repeat with the remaining cookies.

For image see page 325

GINGERBREAD

Piparkökur (Iceland)
Pepperkaker (Norway)
Piparkakut (Finland)
Brunkager (Denmark)
Pepparkakor (Sweden)

There can be no Nordic Christmas without gingerbread and almost everyone I know bakes at least a couple of batches during the month of December.

Most of them buy their gingerbread dough from the supermarket, which is a pity as it is quite simple to make it yourself. There are some differences between the countries; one of them is which leavening agent we use. In Denmark most recipes I have found use potash, which is potassium carbonate. (Potash was also used elsewhere in the old days but today it is hard to find in food stores – at least in Sweden.) In Sweden and Finland almost every recipe I found uses bicarbonate of soda (baking soda), while in Norway some recipes use bicarbonate of soda and others use baking powder.

I would assume that the resulting differences between the finished gingerbread would be minute. All of the chemicals mentioned above function the same way, and I think that the only real difference is that they are alkaline to different degrees. Potash is the strongest, baking powder the weakest and bicarbonate of soda somewhere in the middle. In general terms, a more alkaline leavening agent gives a shorter texture to the gingerbread.The recipe below is my grandma's. It uses bicarbonate of soda, but you can use potash if you want.

The way the dough is fashioned into gingerbreads also differs a bit from country to country. The Danes like to shape theirs into a log, before chilling it and cutting it into thin slices that are then baked. This works well when you add almonds and pistachios to your gingerbread (also a Danish thing). The dough is stiff enough to cut without disturbing the position of the nuts, and it creates a really pretty mosaic effect. The other option, which is more common in Sweden and in other places too, sometimes also in Denmark, is to roll the dough out and use a cookie cutter to create shapes before baking them.

Oh, and a weird thing: we all put ginger in our gingerbreads, but we don't call them gingerbreads; we call them pepper cakes – and we don't put any pepper in them. The only ones that come close to this are the Danes, who add some allspice. In Sweden we stopped putting pepper in our *pepparkakor* in the early part of the nineteenth century, although the reason for this is a bit of a mystery.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Resting time: 2 days
Makes: enough for a traditional, Nordic family gingerbread free-for-all – including a small gingerbread house / enough gingerbread to decorate a fairly large house and feed a small family.

350 g/12 oz (1¾ cups) sugar
280 g/10 oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) golden syrup
200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) milk
250 g/9 oz (2¼ sticks) butter, cut into 2 cm/¾ inch cubes
2 teaspoons salt
1 tablespoon ground cloves
1 tablespoon finely ground cardamom seeds
2 tablespoons ground cassia cinnamon
1 tablespoon ground ginger
1 tablespoon ground allspice (for a Danish version)
300 g/11 oz whole blanched almonds and 100 g/3½ oz pistachios (for a Danish version)
1 kg/2¼ lb (8½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
1 tablespoon bicarbonate of soda (baking soda), or use potash, for a Danish version

Combine the sugar, golden syrup and milk in a pan. Bring it to the boil, then remove the pan from the heat and leave it to cool down a little.

Place the butter, salt and the spices in a bowl and pour on the still warm (but not hot) syrup. Stir until all the butter has melted and the mixture has cooled down to room temperature. If you are making a Danish version, this is when you add the nuts.

Sift the flour and bicarbonate of soda (baking soda) together into the bowl and mix everything together with your hands until fully combined. Shape into a tight lump and wrap in clingfilm (plastic wrap). Leave the dough to rest in the refrigerator for 48 hours before using it.

For gingerbread rounds, unwrap the rested dough (which will be rather stiff) and divide into equal-sized portions. Roll each piece into a log and cut them into 3-mm/⅛-inch slices – or thicker, if you prefer. If you have added nuts to the dough you will need a really sharp knife to cut them neatly.

Alternatively, for gingerbread shapes, unwrap the rested dough (which will be rather stiff) and divide it into workable portions. Roll each one out on a very lightly floured work counter (too much flour will make them dry). Cut them into the desired shapes with a knife or a cookie cutter. For examples of traditional shapes, see page 334.

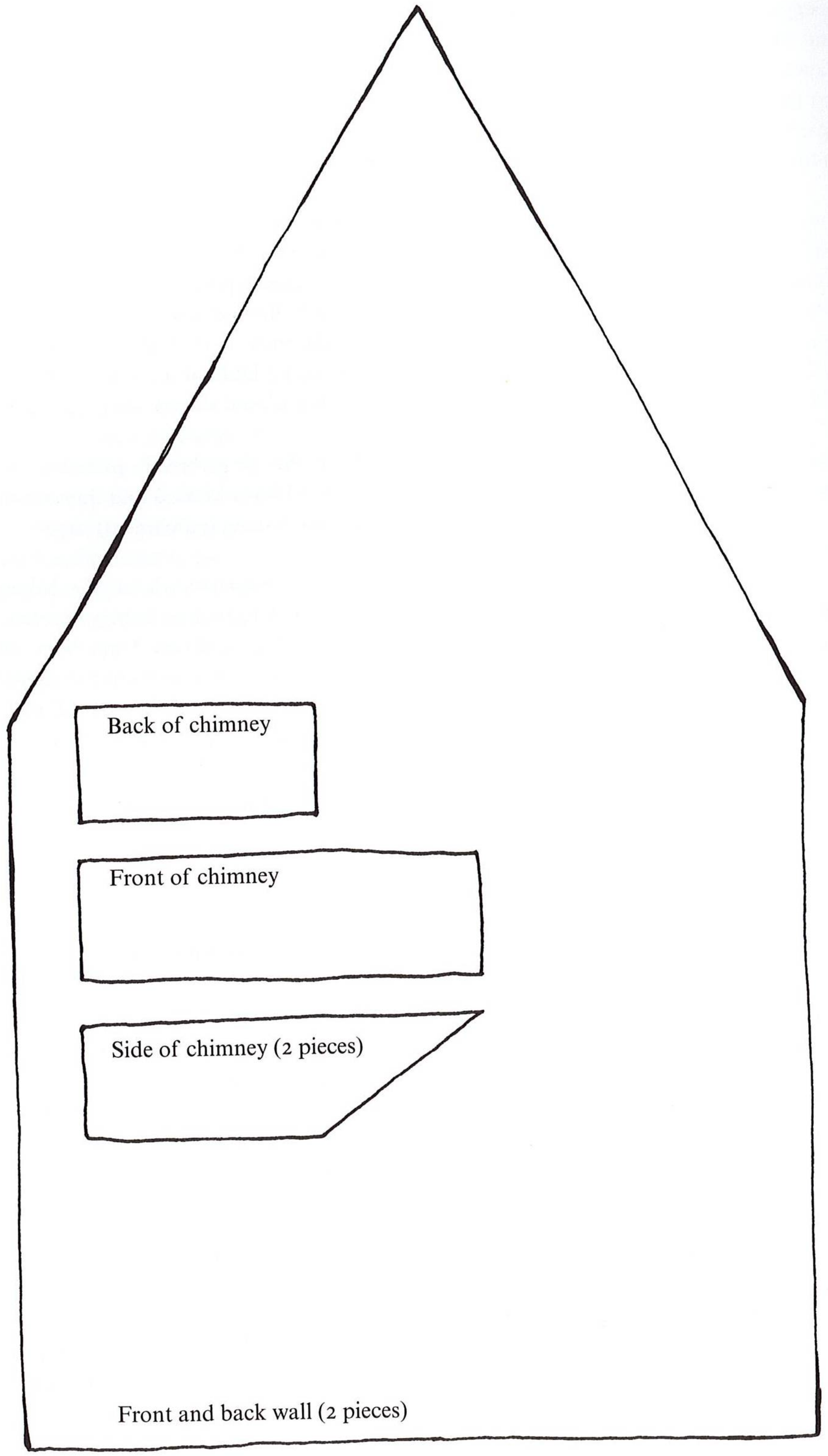
To bake the gingerbread, preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and line several baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

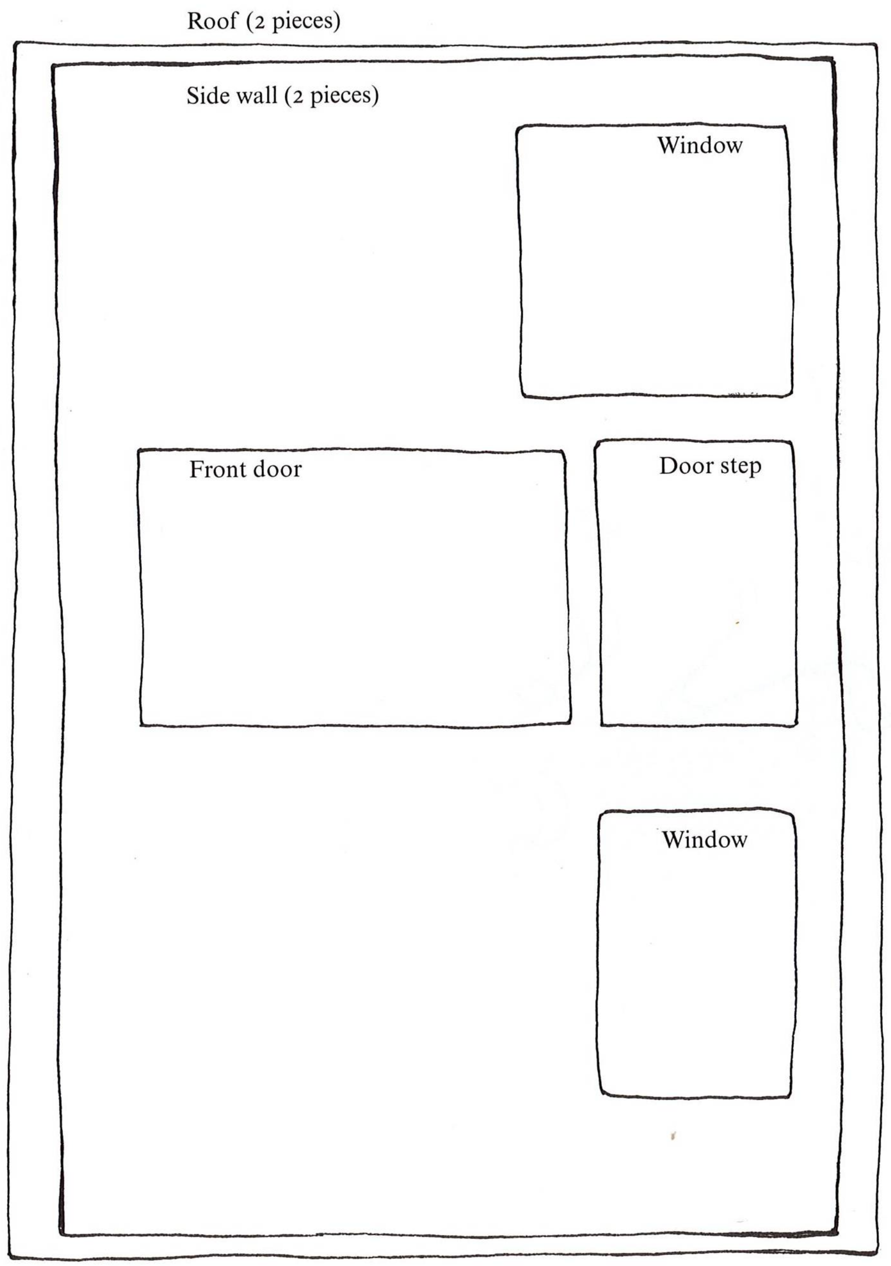
Arrange the gingerbreads on the baking sheets, bake for no longer than 5 minutes, then leave to cool on the baking sheets. Time them carefully as it is very easy to burn them at the edges, which I hate. It doesn't matter if they are a little bit soft in the middle as they harden while they cool down.

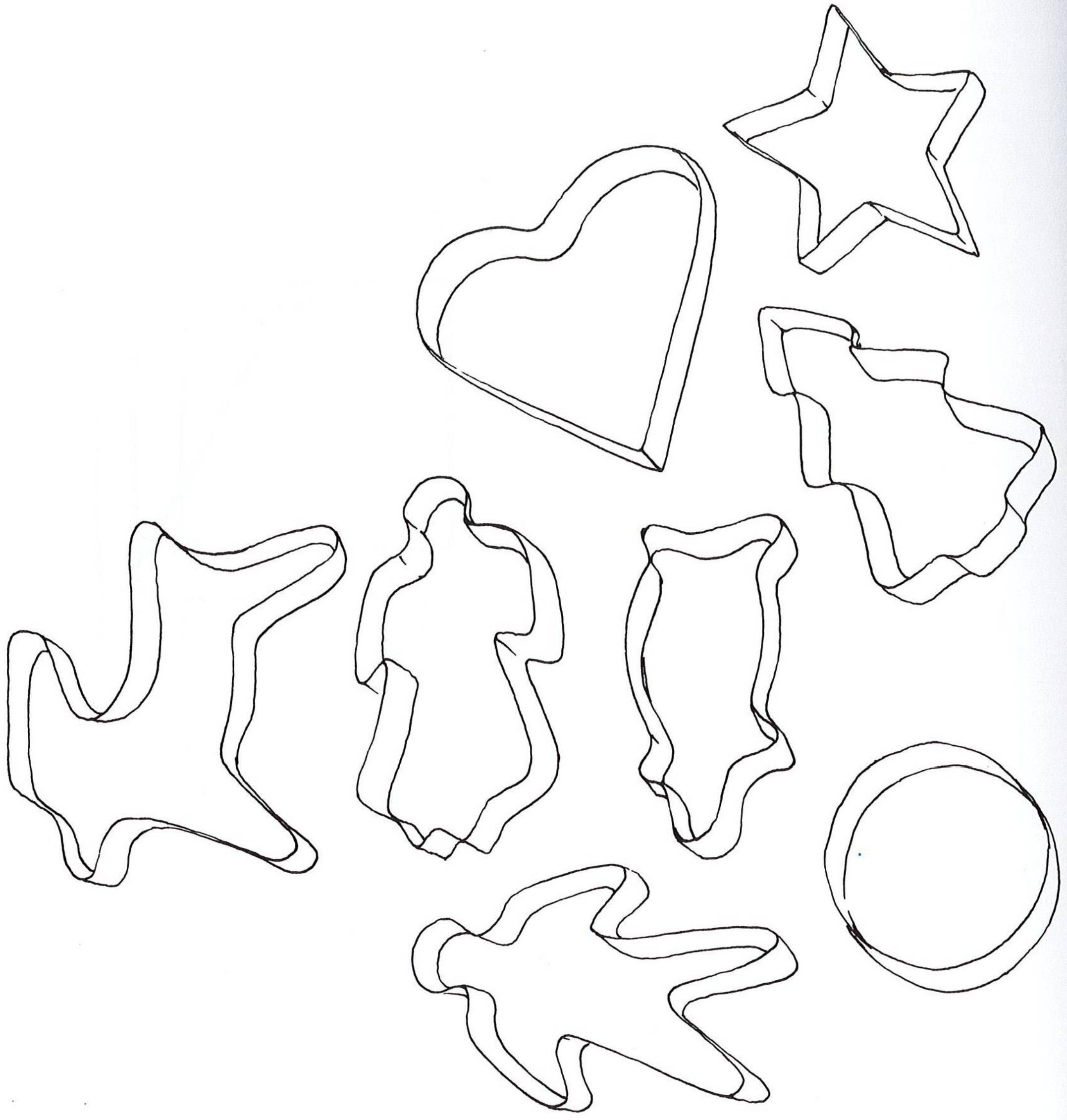
For image see page 337

GINGERBREAD HOUSE

If you would like to make a gingerbread house, you can use the templates on pages 332–3. Trace them, place on the dough and cut around them. Bake the parts the same way as in the recipe above. Once cool, glue the pieces together using melted sugar. Melt the sugar in a cast-iron pan and heat it until light golden. For those who are not going to eat their dusty old gingerbread house when it is done decorating a room (a month later), I would recommend using a glue gun instead; it makes the building a lot easier. Decorate your gingerbread house with frosting 'icicles', assorted candies and a dusting of icing (confectioners') sugar 'snow'.


Back of chimney
Front of chimney
Side of chimney (2 pieces)
Front and back wall (2 pieces)


Roof (2 pieces)
Side wall (2 pieces)
Window
Front door
Door step
Window



Traditional gingerbread cookie cutter shapes. Clockwise from top left: heart, star, tree, circle, man, pig, woman and reindeer

SCANIAN THICK AND CHEWY GINGERSNAPS

Skånepepparkaka (Sweden)

I love these gingersnaps spread with salty butter and mature hard cheese, for a snack with coffee on the side.

They should be chewy, and for them to remain so, you need to store them in an airtight container.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Resting time: 2 days
Makes: about 25 gingersnaps

80 g/3 oz (¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
210 g/7¼ oz (⅔ cup) golden syrup or molasses
75 g/2¾ oz (5 tablespoons) butter
good pinch of salt
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground cloves
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
50 ml/2 fl oz (3½ tablespoons) milk
1 egg
400 g/14 oz (3¼ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
1 teaspoon baker's ammonia
1 teaspoon baking powder

Combine the sugar, golden syrup or molasses, butter, salt and spices in a pan and melt over a medium heat, stirring continuously. Remove from the heat and add the milk to the mixture. Stir continuously until it cools almost to room temperature. Add the egg and mix until fully incorporated.

Transfer the mixture to the bowl of a stand mixer. Sift the flour and leavening agents together into the bowl and beat until properly combined, but not for any longer. Tip the dough out of the bowl and wrap it in clingfilm (plastic wrap). Refrigerate for 48 hours.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and line several baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Unwrap the chilled dough and place it on a lightly floured work counter. Shape into a long log and cut into 25 slices. Shape each slice into a little ball, then place on the prepared baking sheets, flattening them gently with the palm of your hand.

Bake the gingersnaps for 12–15 minutes, until they are cooked, but not dry. Once they start to brown a little around the edges they are generally done. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

For image see page 337

PEPPERNUTS

Peppernøtter (Norway)
Pebernødder (Denmark)
Pepparnötter (Sweden)

These little cookies are commonly eaten in several parts of the Nordic region. The flavouring differs a little from recipe to recipe, but nothing consistent to a single country. They are one of the very few recipes that seem to be quite similar everywhere.

The spices that are used in different combinations and proportions are ground ginger, cardamom, black pepper, cloves and cinnamon. There is also some variety to how the cookies are leavened from one recipe to another. Some use baker's ammonia, others use bicarbonate of soda (baking soda) and yet others use baking powder.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Resting time: overnight
Makes: about 100 peppernuts

125 g/4½ oz (1 stick) butter
80 g/3 oz (⅓ cup) sugar
100 g/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup) golden syrup
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
2 teaspoons ground cloves
2 teaspoons ground ginger
2 teaspoons finely ground cardamom seeds
1 teaspoon ground black peppercorns
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
  (baking soda)
250 g/9 oz (2 cups plus 1 tablespoon) weak
  (soft) wheat flour
pinch of salt

Combine the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat until pale and creamy. Add the golden syrup and beat until fully incorporated. Sift the dry ingredients together into the bowl. Work until the mixture is just combined and forms a smooth dough, but not for any longer. Cover the bowl and refrigerate overnight.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line several baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Remove the dough from the refrigerator and shape into about 100 balls, the size of a large, unshelled hazelnut. Arrange them on the prepared sheets, leaving some space between them to allow for spreading as they cook.

Bake for 10 minutes, or until golden. Remove from the oven and leave to cool before moving. Once completely cold, store the peppernuts in an airtight container.

For image see page opposite

Clockwise from top left: Scanian Thick and Chewy Gingersnaps (page 335); Gingerbread (page 330); Peppernuts (page 336)

DANISH MARZIPAN NAPOLEON HATS

Marcipanhatte / Napoleonshatte (Denmark)

This is one of the classic Danish pastries – a ball of nougat rolled up in marzipan and folded into a disc of short pastry that's said to be shaped like Napoleon's hat. An essential for taste, but not so much for historical accuracy as Napoleon wore a two-horned (bicorne) hat rather than a three-horned (tricorne), which this pastry is generally shaped into.

There is also a Swedish version of these cookies that is quite similar – however it lacks the nougat filling in the centre and the dipping in chocolate part of the Danish Napoleon hats. The Swedish version also has the marzipan filling coloured light green with food colouring. The recipe follows directly after this one.

Preparation and cooking time: 40 minutes
Resting time: at least 1 hour, preferably overnight
Makes: 20 hats

100 g/3½ oz nougat, cut into 20 equal pieces
200 g/7 oz dark (semisweet) chocolate

For the short pastry
300 g/11 oz (2½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons) butter, cold and cut into 1-cm/½-inch dice
100 g/3½ oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons) icing (confectioners') sugar
1 egg

For the marzipan
350 g/12 oz Almond Paste, grated (page 531)
125 g/4½ oz (½ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
1 egg white

Place all of the ingredients for the short pastry in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the knife blade attachment and process until crumbly, but don't overwork. Push the crumbles into one larger ball and wrap tightly in clingfilm (plastic wrap). Leave to rest somewhere cool for at least 1 hour, or ideally overnight.

Add the almond paste, sugar and egg white to the bowl of the food processor fitted with the knife blade attachment and mix until smooth. Wrap this in clingfilm and leave to rest in a cool place. Like the short pastry dough, this benefits from resting overnight, as it will be easier to handle, but you can use it after just an hour of resting.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Divide the marzipan into 20 equal pieces and roll them into balls with your hands.

Roll the short pastry out on a lightly floured work counter to a thickness of 3 mm/⅛ inch before cutting it into 20 discs with an 8-cm/3-inch pastry cutter.

Push a piece of nougat into each ball of marzipan and place that seam side down in the middle of a pastry disc. Fold the edges of the pastry disc up and push them towards the sides of the ball so that it takes the shape of a three-horned hat and place on the prepared baking sheets. Repeat with all the pastry, nougat and marzipan.

Bake for 8–10 minutes. Remove them from the oven and leave the hats to cool completely.

Melt the chocolate following the instructions on page 82. Dip the flat underside of each cooled hat in the melted chocolate before placing them onto a sheet of baking paper. Leave them until the chocolate has set.

SWEDISH MARZIPAN NAPOLEON HATS

Napoleonhattar (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Resting time: 30 minutes
Makes: 50 hats

For the dough
270 g/9½ oz (2¼ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
90 g/3¼ oz (⅓ cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
150 g/5 oz (stick plus 2½ tablespoons) butter, cold and diced
1 egg

For the filling
200 g/7 oz Almond Paste, grated (page 531)
1 egg white
2–3 drops red or green food colouring

For the icing
180 g/6¼ oz (1½ cups) icing (confectioners') sugar
a few drops of water or freshly squeezed lemon juice

Combine the flour, sugar and butter together in a food processor and process to the consistency of coarse sand. Add the egg and process until combined. Wrap in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. For the filling, mix the almond paste with the egg white and the colouring, if using, together in a bowl.

Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and roll it out quite thin. Use a cookie cutter or glass to make 50 rounds. Roll the almond paste into 50 small balls and put 1 ball in the middle of each dough round. Use your fingers to press the edges of the dough together towards the middle over the almond paste. The cookies should have 3 edges (like a tricorne hat).

Place them on the prepared baking sheets and bake for about 8 minutes. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

Make the icing by mixing the icing (confectioners') sugar with the water or lemon juice in a bowl. Put a little of the icing on the top of each cookie in the centre.

BERLIN CROWNS / EGG KRINGLES

Berlinerkranser (Norway)
Berlinerkransar / Äggkringlor (Sweden)

This classic Scandinavian-style pretzel gets its very short texture and rich flavour from quite a bit of egg yolk – both hard-boiled and raw – in the batter.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Resting time: 30 minutes
Makes: 20 crowns

2 hard-boiled egg yolks
3 egg yolks
125 g/4½ oz (⅔ cup) sugar
250 g/9 oz (2¼ sticks) butter, at room temperature
300 g/11 oz (2½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 tablespoon milk
pearl sugar, to decorate

Press the hard-boiled egg yolks through a sieve into a large bowl and mix with 2 of the raw yolks and the sugar. Whisk until smooth and creamy.

Add the butter and flour alternately, little by little, working it into a thick batter with your hand. Shape it into a rough ball, then wrap it in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and place in the refrigerator to rest for 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Unwrap the dough and divide it into 2 rolls, cut them into smaller pieces and shape each piece into a smaller roll 12–14 cm/4½–5½ inches in length. Place them onto the prepared baking sheets in the shape of circles with the ends visibly overlapping.

Whisk the remaining egg yolk with the milk and brush lightly onto each crown. Sprinkle with a little pearl sugar and bake until golden. Leave the crowns to cool on the sheets before moving them.

For image see page 351

HAZELNUT TOPS

Nöttoppar (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: about 40 cookies

200 g/7 oz (2 cups) ground hazelnuts
150 g/5 oz (¾ cup) sugar
1 tablespoon potato starch
2 eggs
50 g/2 oz (⅓ cup) whole hazelnuts

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Put all the ingredients, except the whole hazelnuts, into a bowl and stir until well combined. Using 2 small spoons, scoop the dough out into pointy tops onto the prepared baking sheets. Press one whole hazelnut into each cookie and bake for 8 minutes. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

VANILLA HORNS

Vaniljhorn (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Resting time: 1 hour
Makes: about 50 cookies

300 g/11 oz (2½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, cold and diced
2 tablespoons vanilla sugar
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar, to decorate

Put the flour, butter and vanilla sugar into a food processor and process until well combined. Wrap the dough in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave it to rest in the refrigerator for 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Prepare a wide plate or bowl with the sugar.

Divide the dough into about 50 equal pieces and roll each piece into a log about 1 cm/½ inch thick, a bit thicker in the middle. Bend the logs so that you get the shape of a horn and then place them on the prepared baking sheets. Bake for 10–12 minutes. They should not get too much colour. Remove from the oven and turn them in the sugar while they are still warm, then leave to cool.

For image see page opposite

ICELANDIC AIR COOKIES

Loftkøkur (Iceland)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Resting time: overnight
Makes: 30–50 cookies

375 g/13¼ oz (3 cups plus 1 tablespoon) icing (confectioners') sugar
1 egg
1 teaspoon baker's ammonia
3 tablespoons cocoa powder

Mix all the ingredients together in a bowl, cover with clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave it in the refrigerator overnight.

Preheat the oven to 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2. Line 2–3 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

If you have a stand mixer with a grinder and a cookie press attachment (see illustration page 84) for that grinder, you should use this on the zig-zag setting to shape your *loftkøkur*. Make about 20 cm/8 inches at one go and then carefully flip it over onto a prepared baking sheet and cut it into 5-cm/2-inch pieces.

If you don't have the equipment mentioned above, then roll the dough into logs on a work counter, about 2 cm/¾ inch thick, and cut them into 5-cm/2-inch pieces. Use a fork to press down a little to flatten and make a pattern.

Place the cookies on the prepared baking sheets and bake for 10 minutes. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

For image see page opposite

Clockwise from top left: Shortbread Cookies with Meringue Filling (page 320); Vanilla Horns (page 340); Brandy Shortbread Wreaths (page 323); Chessboard Cookies (page 327); Cut Almond Shortbreads Rolled in Sugar (page 320); Icelandic Air Cookies (page 340)

ICELANDIC SYRUP COOKIES

Sírópskökur (Iceland)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Resting time: 2 hours or overnight
Makes: 30–50 cookies

250 g/9 oz (1 cup plus 2 tablespoons) brown sugar
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (4 cups plus 2 tablespoons) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
2 teaspoons baking powder
2½ teaspoons ground cloves
2½ teaspoons ground cassia cinnamon
200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, at room temperature
200 g/7 oz (⅔ cup) golden syrup
1 egg

Put all of the dry ingredients and the butter into the bowl of a stand mixer and mix until crumbly. Add the syrup and egg and keep mixing until well combined. Cover the bowl with clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave the dough in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours, overnight will also be fine.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line 3 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and roll it out to about 3 mm/⅛ inch thickness, then use a cookie cutter to cut out cookies. Place them on the prepared baking sheets and bake for 5–7 minutes, or until slightly golden. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

POTATO KRINGLES

Potatiskringlor (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 25 kringles

100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
150 g/5 oz boiled potato, cold
150 g/5 oz (1¼ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
2 bitter almonds, grated
zest of ½ lemon
pearl sugar, to decorate

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Put all the ingredients, except the pearl sugar, into a food processor and process until just combined. Tip the dough out onto a work counter and roll out to a thin log, about 5 mm/¼ inch thick, and then divide it into 12-cm/4½-inch pieces. Shape each piece into a kringle (see illustration, page 294).

Spread the pearl sugar out on a plate. Invert the kringles into the pearl sugar and press down lightly before placing them, sugar side up, on the prepared baking sheets. Bake for 10 minutes. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

JEWISH COOKIES

Jødekakur (Iceland)
Jødekakor (Norway)
Jødekager (Denmark)
Judebröd (Sweden)

Among the many traditional recipes of Nordic cooking that have been given racist names in the past (Chocolate Oatmeal Balls, page 388 and Peppermint and Chocolate Pastilles, page 394, to name two), I think this is a misunderstood cookie, falsely accused of anti-Semitism by those not understanding its past. The name, which is *judebröd,* literally translating to 'Jew bread', simply refers to the origin of this particular pastry, brought to Scandinavia by Sephardic Jews emigrating from Spain and Portugal during the seventeenth century. Since then the recipe has been Scandified, and what was a cookie fattened with olive oil and sweetened with honey is now more of a shortbread, containing butter and brown sugar.

Judebröd are flavoured with cinnamon and cardamom and many people, especially in Norway, Denmark and Sweden, have them around Christmas. In Sweden, the *judebröd* dough is rolled out into a sheet and then cut into either half-moons or circles before being decorated. In Denmark it is more often rolled into a fat log, which is then chilled and cut into slices. In Sweden, *judebröd* are garnished either with pearl sugar or ordinary sugar mixed with chopped almonds and ground cinnamon. In Denmark, ordinary sugar mixed with ground cinnamon seems to be the prevalent topping. Some recipes contain white sugar rather than brown. Do as you like; I prefer brown.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Resting time: 30 minutes
Makes: 20 cookies

200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, cut into cubes
250 g/9 oz (1¼ cups) brown sugar
1 teaspoon finely ground cardamom seeds
1 teaspoon ground cassia cinnamon
2 eggs
1 teaspoon baker's ammonia
380 g/13¼ oz (3 cups plus 2 tablespoons) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
pearl sugar, cane sugar, chopped almonds and/or ground cinnamon, to decorate

Place the butter, sugar, spices and eggs in the bowl of a food processor. Sift the flour and baker's ammonia together into the bowl. Process until just combined, then tip out the dough and shape it into a ball (for Swedish *judebröd*) or a log (for Danish *judebröd*). Wrap in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Unwrap the ball of dough and place on a lightly floured work counter. Roll out and cut into your preferred shapes, or cut the log into thick slices. Brush the surface of the cookies very lightly with water and decorate with your choice of topping.

Lift the *judebröd* onto the prepared baking sheets and bake until lightly golden. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

CAT'S TONGUE COOKIES

Kissankielet / Kattungor (Finland)
Kattungar (Sweden)

Cat's tongue cookies are common all over the world, including in the Nordics. They are commonly flavoured with either lemon or orange zest.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 40 cookies

100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar
4 egg whites
zest of 1 lemon or orange
240 g/8½ oz (2 cups) plain (all-purpose) flour

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Place the butter and sugar into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and work until pale and fluffy. Whisk the egg whites in a separate bowl until soft peaks form, then fold them into the butter mixture together with the zest. Sift the flour into the bowl and stir until combined. Transfer the batter to a piping (pastry) bag fitted with a nozzle and pipe it out into 6-cm/2½-inch lengths of 1 cm/½ inch in diameter onto the prepared baking sheets. Bake for 15 minutes, or until light golden. Remove from the oven and leave them to cool.

For image see page 321

ALMOND TART SHELLS

Mandelmusslor (Sweden)

These delicate tart shells, flavoured with some bitter almond, are usually baked in small individual *mandelmussla* pans with a fluted edge. They are often served with a bowl of whipped cream and some berries or jam (pages 510–11) on the side. To me they are an essential part of the sweet selection of the Swedish Christmas dinner.

You could substitute the almonds in the recipe – which in my method you grind yourself – for ready-made ground almonds, but it is a bit like using sawdust instead of lovely fragrant almonds, which quite frankly seems unnecessary since grinding almonds isn't very difficult or laborious.

If you are unable to find the special *mandelmussla* pans, then use any mini, fluted tart pans.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Resting time: 20 minutes or, preferably, overnight
Makes: 20 shells

65 g/2½ oz (⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons) almonds, blanched, peeled and dried
65 g/2½ oz (⅓ cup) sugar
110 g/3¾ oz (7½ tablespoons) butter, at room temperature, plus extra to grease
1 egg
275 g/9¾ oz (2¼ cups) soft (weak) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
2 bitter almonds

Grind the almonds finely in a mortar with a pestle or in a nut grinder (see illustration page 84).

Combine the sugar and butter in the bowl of a stand mixer and beat until pale and creamy. Add the egg to the mix and beat until well combined. Add the ground almonds, then sift the flour directly into the bowl. Use a microplane or fine grater to grate the bitter almonds straight into the mixture, then mix until fully combined, but not for any longer.

Shape the dough into a ball and wrap it in cling-film (plastic wrap). Place in the refrigerator to rest for a minimum of 20 minutes, but preferably overnight.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and lightly butter the *mandelmussla* pans.

Unwrap the dough, roll it into a long log and cut it into 20 equal pieces. Roll each piece into a ball and place one in each buttered pan. Press the dough in evenly with your fingers, making sure you press it into all of the fluted edges.

Bake until just golden. Remove from the oven and leave the shells for a few minutes before taking them out of the pans.

For image see page 351

GLAZED INDIVIDUAL ALMOND TARTS

Mazariner (Denmark)
Mazariner (Sweden)

These are best made in oval, disposable aluminium cups called *mazarin* cups but can be made in any other little tart moulds that seem suitable.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 10 tarts

For the dough
100 g/3½ (7 tablespoons) butter, cold and diced, plus extra to grease
40 g/1½ oz (3 tablespoons) sugar
1 egg
200 g/7 oz (1⅔ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour

For the filling
200 g/7 oz Almond Paste (page 531), grated
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
pinch of salt
2 eggs

To decorate
½ quantity White Icing (page 530)

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and butter 10 small cups or moulds, about 7.5 cm/3 inches in diameter.

Place all of the ingredients for the dough in a food processor and process until just combined.

Tip the dough onto a work counter, shape it into a loaf and divide that into 10 equal pieces. With your fingers press the dough out in the prepared moulds so that they get an even thickness.

To make the filling, mix the almond paste, butter and salt in a bowl until smooth. Mix in the eggs one by one until fully incorporated. Spoon the filling into the dough-lined moulds. The filling should reach about three quarters of the way to the top.

Bake the almond tarts for about 15 minutes, or until lightly golden and set. Remove from the oven and leave to cool before glazing with white icing.

For image see page 351

GLAZED INDIVIDUAL ALMOND TARTS, HISTORICAL VERSION

Mazariner, äldre recept (Sweden)

In early recipes these individual tarts don't have a shortcrust pastry shell surrounding the almond filling like in the modern ones. The filling is rather just baked in the *mazarin* cups where the heat from the oven will make the part of it that is touching the cup become brown and crisp up a bit. It will not give an as well-defined shell as the shortcrust pastry in modern recipes, but almost.

Personally I tend to prefer the modern ones. I think there is something to the contrast between shell and filling, but you do still see this variation on occasion in older recipe books and in some pastry shops and cafés so I thought it was worth including it.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 15 tarts

130 g/4½ oz (1 cup) almonds, blanched
30 g/1 oz (2 tablespoons) weak (soft) wheat flour
150 g/5 oz (¾ cup) sugar
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, melted, plus extra to grease
3 eggs
220 g/7¾ oz (1¾ cups plus 1 tablespoon) icing (confectioners') sugar, to decorate

Grind the almonds in a nut grinder (see illustration page 84) to a very fine flour. Put the flour into a bowl, add the sugar and 1½ tablespoons water and mix to a paste.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter 15 *mazarin* cups or moulds then line with aluminium foil.

In another bowl, whisk the eggs to a fluffy foam, then add the eggs to the almond paste and stir in the flour and melted butter. Fill the cups or moulds with the batter, then place them on a baking sheet and bake for 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and leave them to cool before icing.

Make the icing by mixing the icing (confectioners') sugar and 2½ tablespoons water together, then use it to glaze the almond tarts.

GLAZED INDIVIDUAL ALMOND TARTS WITH RASPBERRY

Katalaner (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 10 tarts

1 quantity Glazed Individual Almond Tarts (opposite)
150 ml/5 fl oz (½ cup) raspberry jam (pages 510–11)

Follow the instructions for making the glazed individual almond tarts opposite. Add a spoonful of raspberry jam before you fill the tarts.

Bake for about 10 minutes or until lightly golden and set, then leave to cool. Before glazing with the white icing, spread a little raspberry jam on top of each tart, then the tarts will look nice and pink.

GLAZED INDIVIDUAL GINGERBREAD ALMOND TARTS

Pepparkaksmazariner (Sweden)

This is wrong, but tasty, but still wrong. It hurts my soul a little to write the recipe, and a little more to make them. But then, they are, in fact, really delicious. I think that this is one of those adaptations of a classic recipe that will one day be mainstream and considered a standard variation. All it needs now is to move from the obscurity of the initiated pastry bloggers into everyone's *fika* table, and for someone to champion it, perhaps on television.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 10 tarts

1 quantity Glazed Individual Almond Tarts
  (page 344)
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1 teaspoon finely ground cardamom seeds
1 teaspoon ground cloves
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Follow the instructions for making the glazed individual almond tarts on page 344, but add the spices to the filling.

GLAZED INDIVIDUAL ALMOND TARTS WITH TOSCA TOPPING

Toscamazariner (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 10 tarts

1 quantity Glazed Individual Almond Tarts
  (page 344)

For the tosca topping
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter
90 g/3¼ oz (½ cup) sugar
1½ tablespoons plain (all-purpose) flour
150 g/5 oz (1 cup plus 1 tablespoon) flaked
  or chopped almonds

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6.

Follow the instructions for making the glazed individual almond tarts on page 344. Make the tosca topping when you have finished making the batter and spooned it into the cups or *mazarin* moulds lined with glazed individual almond tarts.

Melt the butter and sugar together in a small pan over a medium heat then add the flour and almonds. Keep over the heat until it just starts to boil, then remove from the heat and spread it over the almond tarts. Bake for 10–15 minutes, or until the topping is evenly caramelized. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

GLAZED ALMOND TART, LARGE / MAZARIN TORTE

Mazarintårta (Sweden)

Make one quantity of Glazed Individual Almond Tarts (page 344). Instead of dividing the short pastry into individual moulds, roll it out onto a lightly floured work counter and place it in a 28 cm/11 inch round tart pan. Add the filling as in the original recipe and bake at 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6, but adjust the time to 30 minutes to compensate for the larger size. Glaze the same way as for the individual tarts.

SHORTBREAD AND ALMOND TARTS

Polyneér / Kejsarkronor (Sweden)

The name of these little almond tarts in Swedish differs according to where in the country you come from. In the west they are called *Kejsarkronor*, which means emperor's crown, while in the east they are generally called *polyneér*, which vaguely points towards something that might somehow have to do with Polynesia – it's unclear what. The fact, though, is that the history of this pastry is quite well documented and has nothing to do with any of the things the Swedish names allude them to. It is a carbon copy of the German baker's classic *Leipziger Lerche*, or Larks from Leipzig. In the eighteenth century, larks were eaten en masse during autumn (fall) and were often roasted whole in a pie, secured with string. When the German lark populations started to decline it was forbidden to eat the bird and the pies had to be filled with other ingredients. One very popular substitution, which originated in the city of Leipzig, was almond paste. This might seem strange as it isn't savoury, at least not in comparison to a whole roasted songbird, however, 300 years ago there was much more sweetness in festive savoury food and much more meat in sweet foods. The line of what's what was not as straight and well defined as it is today and this substitution might have seemed much less far-fetched back then as it does now.

The first version of a Swedish recipe for this pastry was published in the early 1930s under the name *kejsarkronor* – the crossed stripes of short pastry on top are said to symbolize the string that held the original bird in place. When the other name, *polyneér*, became common, and why it did so, has proved difficult to find out. There is some debate as to whether the two names are even referring to the same pastry. According to some, one of them should be made with puff pastry and the other one with short pastry. I attribute this belief to a misunderstanding somewhere in history as puff pastry (*smördeg*) and short pastry (*mördeg*) sound very similar in Swedish and the published support for a puff pastry version is very weak. Privately I think I know which well-respected cooking magazine made this error around 1970, but I'm not going to point any fingers of blame on this.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Resting time: 30 minutes
Makes: 12 tarts

Fort the shortcrust pastry (basic pie dough)
165 g/5¾ oz (1⅓ cups) plain (all-purpose)
  flour, plus extra for dusting
3 tablespoons sugar
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, cold
  and cut into 1-cm/½-inch dice, plus extra
  to grease
1 egg yolk (don't throw the white away, you
  will need that for the filling)

For the filling
100 g/3½ oz (1 cup) ground almonds
85 g/3 oz (⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
2 egg whites
1 egg yolk

Put the flour, sugar and butter into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and work at medium speed until the butter has been worked into the dry ingredients. It should be crumbly. Add the egg yolk and work until just combined. Bunch the dough up and wrap it tightly in clingfilm (plastic wrap) before leaving it in the refrigerator to rest for 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Lightly butter and flour 12 individual tart pans, 6 cm/2½ inches in diameter. Most commonly these will be disposable aluminium ones, in which case you do not need to butter and flour them.

For the filling, put the ground almonds, sugar, egg whites and egg yolk into a bowl and stir with a whisk until there are no lumps remaining.

Set aside 20 per cent of the short pastry and divide the remaining 80 per cent into 12 equal pieces. Roll each piece into a ball. Place each ball into the prepared tart pans, then, using your fingers, squeeze the dough out to completely cover the inside of the pans in an even layer.

Place the dough-lined tart pans on a baking sheet and add the filling, which should reach exactly two thirds of the way up the side of the pans. Do not overfill as the filling will expand during baking.

Roll the remaining piece of dough out on a lightly floured work counter to a thickness of about 3 mm/⅛ inch before cutting it into 5-mm/¼-inch strips. Place 2 strips over each tart to form a cross pattern and press them to the edge.

Bake for 15–20 minutes, or until lightly golden. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

For image see page 351

DANISH GLAZED RASPBERRY SQUARES

Hindbærsnitter (Denmark)

For this popular pastry, a layer of firm-set raspberry jam is spread between two layers of shortcrust pastry (basic pie dough) and topped with quite a thick layer of icing (frosting). *Hindbærsnitter* are often decorated with multi-coloured sprinkles and I have even seen them in some Copenhagen pastry shops being scattered with liberal amounts of freeze-dried raspberries. Some recipes also indicate that decorating *hindbærsnitter* with fresh raspberries is a good idea, but I imagine that this would only make the icing wet and the berries would wilt. I prefer them with no additional decoration on top of the icing.

Preparation and cooking time: 40 minutes
Resting time: 1 hour
Makes: 12 squares

265 g/9¼ oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) firm-set raspberry jam (pages 510–11) or marmalade
1 quantity White Icing (page 530)

For the shortcrust pastry (basic pie dough)
220 g/7¾ oz (2 sticks) cold salted butter, cut into small cubes
350 g/12 oz (3 cups) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
155 g/5½ oz (1¼ cups) icing (confectioners') sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla sugar
1 egg

Pulse the butter, flour and sugars in a food processor until it looks like sand. Add the egg and pulse just until it is completely incorporated, but no longer. Shape the dough into a ball and wrap it tightly in clingfilm (plastic wrap). Leave to rest in the refrigerator for a minimum of 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4.

Unwrap the dough and divide it in half. Place each half on a sheet of baking (parchment) paper and roll out to a 30 x 40 cm/12 x 16 inch rectangle. Lift onto baking sheets and bake until a lightly golden.

Remove the cooked pastry layers from the oven and leave them to cool down a little. Spread one pastry layer with raspberry jam, then lift the other pastry layer on top. Press gently and leave to cool completely.

Top with a thick layer of icing and leave it to set completely before cutting into 12 squares.

For image see page 351

FINNISH SPOON COOKIES

Lusikkaleivät (Finland)
Skedkakor (Sweden)

These shortbreads filled with firm raspberry jam or Apple Compote (page 523), besides being delicious, are possibly the most emblematic of the Finnish shortbreads. If you are going to bake one Finnish shortbread cookie, this is the one to pick. It is named 'spoon cookie' because the batter is shaped into ovals by being pressed into a spoon before being baked. In some recipes the cookies are coated in sugar and in others not, so I have included that as an option.

Preparation cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 30–40 cookies

200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter
150 g/5 oz (¾ cup) sugar, plus extra to coat (coating is optional)
250 g/9 oz (2 cups) plain (all-purpose) flour
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)
150 g/5 oz (½ cup) firm raspberry jam (pages 510–11) or Apple Compote (page 523)

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line several baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Place the butter in a pan over a medium heat and allow the butter to melt while stirring with a whisk. Continue stirring until the butter starts browning. Just as it begins to brown, remove it from the heat and keep stirring for a bit, otherwise the milk proteins and lactose, which make up the brown nutty part of brown butter, might sink to the bottom and burn from the residual heat in the pan. If you stir for 2 minutes or so after removing it from the stove it should be enough. Leave the pan to cool until the butter is at room temperature, then add the sugar, flour and bicarbonate of soda (baking soda) and mix well until it is a firm but slightly crumbly dough.

Use a teaspoon (not a teaspoon measure), preferably a slightly larger, old-fashioned one, to dig into the dough picking up a heaped spoonful of the batter. Scrape off the excess by inverting the spoon and dragging it upside down over the edge of the pot so that the excess dough falls back into the pan again. You should now have a spoon completely filled with dough with a nice flat top. Using your hand, push the dough out of the spoon and place it flat-side down on the prepared baking sheets. Bake for 12 minutes, or until barely coloured. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

Meanwhile, spread the extra sugar, if using, out on a plate.When the cookies are cool, place a little jam or compote on the flat side of half of the cookies before placing the other half of the cookies flat-side down on top of the ones with jam. Finish by rolling them in sugar to coat, if you like.

TARTS WITH CHOCOLATE FILLING AND GREEN ICING

Studentskor (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour, plus cooling time
Makes: 10–15 tarts

For the dough
100 g/3 ½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, cold and diced, plus extra to grease
40 g/1½ oz (3 tablespoons) sugar
1 egg
200 g/7 oz (1⅔ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour

For the filling
200 g/7 oz dark (semisweet) chocolate
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) cream
1½ tablespoons butter

For the icing
150 g/5 oz (¼ cups) icing (confectioners') sugar
a few drops green colouring

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and butter 10–15 (depending on size) disposable *mazarin* cups or small moulds.

Put all of the ingredients for the dough in a food processor and process until just combined.

Shape the dough into a loaf on a work counter and divide it into 10–15 equal pieces (depending on the size of your chosen cups or moulds). Use your fingers to press the dough out into the prepared cups or moulds so that they get an even thickness.

Bake them for 10–12 minutes, then remove from the oven and leave them to cool.

Make the filling by breaking the chocolate into smaller pieces and melting it following the instructions on page 82. Add the cream and butter and keep stirring until the butter melts. Pour the filling into the tarts, dividing it among them equally, and then leave to cool completely.

Make the green icing by mixing all the ingredients together in a bowl with 2 tablespoons of water, then use it to glaze the filled tarts. It should completely cover the chocolate.

ROLLED TUILES

Rullrån (Sweden)

Sometimes, like once or twice a year, I drive down to Östersund, the city closest to where we live, to record some radio. The show in which I am from time to time invited to participate is called Meny, and it is broadcast on Swedish Radio 1. Radio one, or P1, is proper grown-up radio, with music for grown-ups and subjects for grown-ups. I always used to think that it was a radio station dull like nothing else, but then, one day, just before I turned thirty, I realized that it is in fact genius.

Meny is one of the most popular shows on the station and it is one of those shows where a panel of guests chat along with a very convivial and pleasant host, where listeners can call in with questions about this and that concerning food and where general advice on cooking and entertaining is given.

Each time I have participated, exactly four days after the broadcast, with absolute accuracy, a small box wrapped in brown paper arrives at my restaurant, Fäviken. The box weighs almost nothing and you can see that someone, probably an older person, has put effort and care into wrapping it up before sending it. The brown paper creased and folded around the box with sharp corners, a piece of string tied around the edges and no tape to hold anything in place. The address and my name are always written in the same corner with ballpoint pen, in a very neat and very small longhand, a simple card rests between the brown paper and the box inside, thanking me for a nice broadcast, still in the same neat and hard-to-read longhand. The contents of the actual box are also the same every time. Ten *rullrån*, rolled tuiles, just like the ones my grandmother used to make when I was growing up. *Rullrån* is one of those cookies that almost no one makes any more, they are kind of tedious to produce. I don't know who is sending them to me and from where, but it always makes me happy to see that someone still puts the time and effort into making these delicious pastries.

The first time I didn't dare eat them at once since I didn't know who had sent them, but I couldn't bear throwing them in the bin either. They sat there for quite some time in their box until I nibbled a bit of one, waiting almost an afternoon, anxiously pacing around the house, thinking that I might die soon. The day after, I ate a whole one and then on the third day I served them to my family for dessert, with whipped cream and some Sugared Cloudberries (page 514).

Whoever you are, sending me the rolled tuiles after listening to me on the radio, thank you so much. They are really tasty and I especially like that you fry them in salted butter, it makes all the difference.

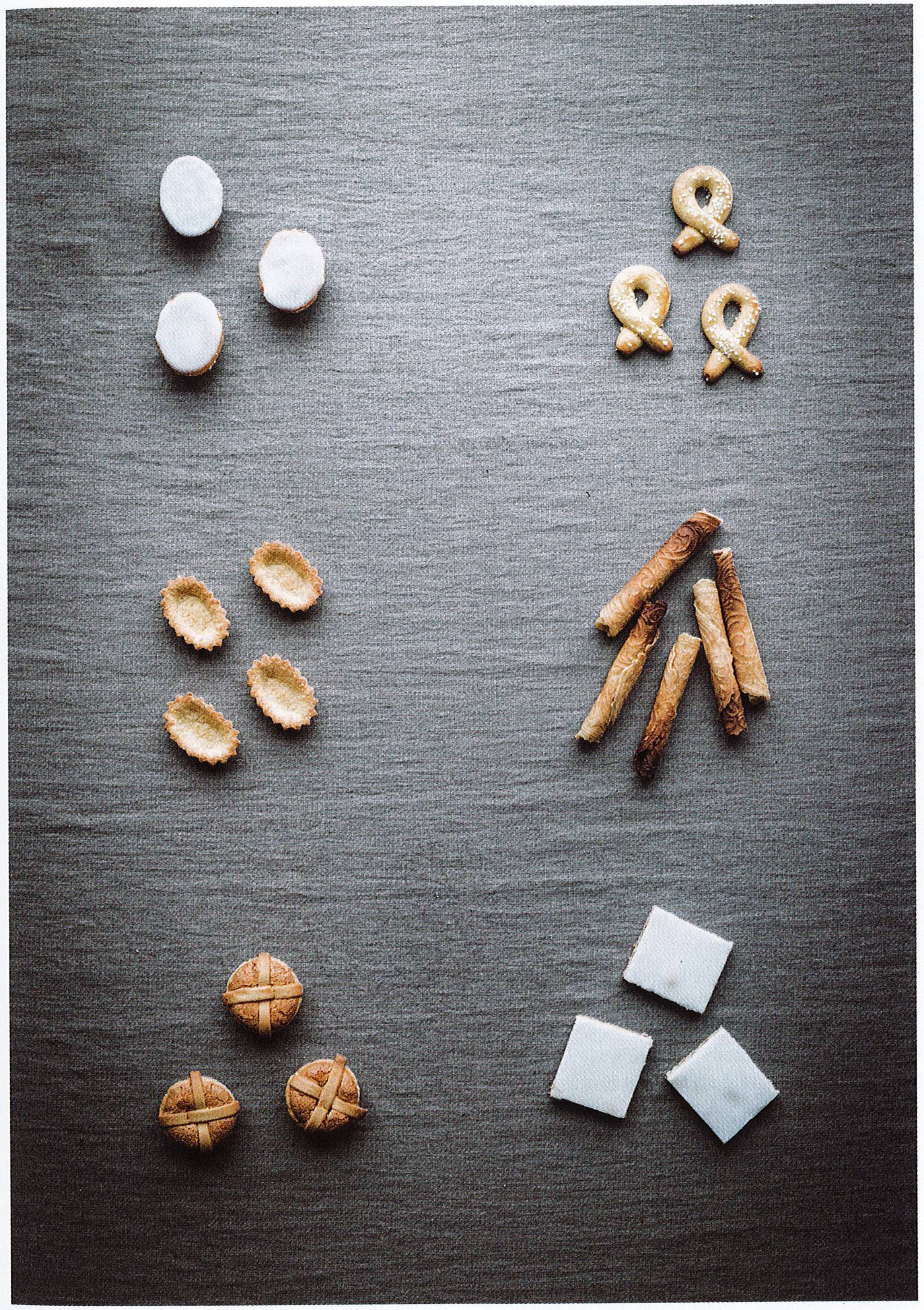
Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Resting time: 20 minutes
Makes: about 30 tuiles

120 g/4 oz (½ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, melted, plus extra for brushing
small pinch of salt
215 g/7½ oz (1¾ cups plus 1 tablespoon) weak (soft) wheat flour
soft butter, for brushing

In a bowl, stir the sugar into the melted butter with the salt. Sift in the flour and combine. Add 300 ml/10½ fl oz (1¼ cups) water, stir and let the batter sit for 20 minutes.

Heat the tuile iron (see illustration page 353) over a medium heat. When it is hot brush it lightly with some soft butter and add a good spoonful of batter. Close the iron and turn it around. Cook until the tuile is golden on both sides, then remove it from the iron and wrap it around a suitable cylindrical stick to shape it. They will cool and harden rather quickly. Repeat with the remaining batter.

For image see page opposite



Clockwise from top left: Glazed Individual Almond Tarts (page 344); Berlin Crowns / Egg Kringles (page 339); Rolled Tuiles (page 350); Danish Glazed Raspberry Squares (page 348); Shortbread and Almond Tarts (page 346); Almond Tart Shells (page 344)

ALMOND TUILES

Mandelflarn (Sweden)

Serve these flat as a sweet snack or *fika* (pages 44–9) with coffee. Or, while they are still warm, bend them over something round, like a bottle or rolling pin, to form a little arc or taco-style shell and fill with Lingonberry Cream (page 499) or something else tasty, and serve as a dessert.

These tuiles are not particularly cookie-like but rather like a thin sheet of buttery caramel with almonds in it.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 12 tuiles

75 g/2¾ oz (¾ cup) chopped almonds
60 g/2¼ oz (4 tablespoons) butter
85 g/3 oz (⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
1 tablespoon plain (all-purpose) flour
65 ml/2 fl oz (¼ cup) milk
pinch of salt
Lingonberry Cream (page 499), optional

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line 3–4 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Mix all of the ingredients, except the lingonberry cream, together in a small pan and bring them to a simmer over a medium heat. Transfer the mixture to a bowl and leave for a few minutes to cool down and firm up a little.

Spoon dollops of the mixture onto the prepared baking sheet. Space them wide apart – not more than 4 per baking sheet because they will spread out a lot. Bake until they have flattened out in the heat and turned golden.

If you want to keep the tuiles flat, then leave them to cool down on the sheet. To bend them, leave for a few minutes on the baking sheet so that they cool just a little but are still pliable, then pick them up with a palette knife or an offset spatula and place them on an appropriately shaped object. Leave them there until they have cooled down completely and are crisp before filling with lingonberry cream, if you like.

NORWEGIAN TUILES

Krumkaker (Norway)

Thin *krumkaker* tuiles are often filled with Norwegian Cloudberry Cream (page 499), whipped cream or other fillings. Depending on what you roll it around, it can be used for different things. The traditional formats for a *krumkaker* tuile are a cone, a straight tube about 1.5 cm/¾ inch in diameter, or an open shell that looks a little like a taco shell.

The tuiles should be cooked on a special *krumkaker* iron.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Resting time: at least 30 minutes, but
preferably overnight
Makes: 25 tuiles

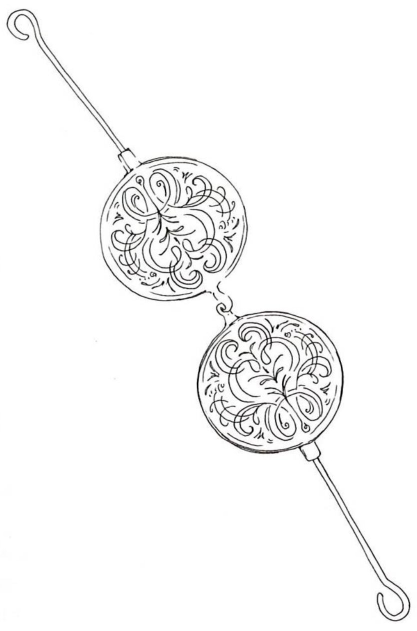
3 eggs
150 g/5 oz (¾ cup) sugar
150 g/5 oz (1¼ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 3 tablespoons) salted
butter, melted, but not too hot, plus extra
for the iron
Norwegian Cloudberry Cream (page 499)
or whipped cream, to fill

In a bowl, beat the eggs and sugar together until creamy. Sift in the flour and mix it in evenly. Add the melted butter and 50–100 ml/2–3½ fl oz (¼–½ cup) water, until the texture looks like a thick pancake batter. Leave the batter to rest in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes, but preferably overnight.

Grease a *krumkaker* iron (see illustration opposite) with butter and heat to a medium temperature. Add a tablespoonful of batter to the iron and press it together immediately. If you are using an electric iron, cook it until the tuile has a light amber colour. If you are using a stovetop model, flip it over immediately after pressing, so that you get the tuile evenly browned.

When the tuiles are cooked, remove them from the iron and, while they are still hot, shape them around something suitable to create a cone or shell. Leave each tuile to firm up while the next tuile is cooking in the iron, then remove from the mould and transfer it to a wire rack for further cooling, just before the next tuile is ready.

Once completely cool, fill the tuiles with Norwegian cloudberry cream or whipped cream.



NORWEGIAN SWEET PRESSED CARDAMOM AND VANILLA TUILES

Goro (Norway)

To make these traditional Norwegian buttery tuiles with cardamom and vanilla you need a *goro* iron to cook them in.

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Resting time: minimum 2 hours,
or preferably overnight
Makes: about 20 tuiles, depending
on the size of your goro iron

300 g/11 oz (2½ sticks) chilled butter,
cut into 1 cm/½ inch pieces, plus extra
for brushing
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (4 cups plus 2 tablespoons)
weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra
for dusting
1 teaspoon finely ground cardamom seeds
1 vanilla bean, split and seeds scraped
175 ml/6 fl oz (¾ cup) cream
120 g/4¼ oz sugar
1 egg

Put the butter, flour, ground cardamom and vanilla seeds into the bowl of a food processor. Process to the texture of coarse sand.

In a bowl, whisk the cream to soft peaks. Beat the sugar with the egg. Add the cream and egg mixture to the food processor and pulse until just combined. Do not overwork the dough. Wrap in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave to rest in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours. I prefer to leave it overnight because it makes it easier to roll out.

Unwrap the cold dough and roll out on a lightly floured work counter to about 4-mm/¼-inch. Cut into the desired shapes, then transfer to the *goro* iron and cook over a medium heat. The iron should be brushed lightly with butter for each new tuile. The tuiles should be lightly golden when ready. Leave to cool on a wire rack.

Tip: Draw the size and shape of your *goro* iron onto a sheet of baking (parchment) paper, and cut it out with a pair of sharp scissors. Use that as a template when cutting the dough into suitable shapes for cooking.

TUILES FRIED IN A SWEDISH SMALL PANCAKE GRIDDLE

Plättbakelser (Sweden)

This is a very old recipe for which you really do need to use the special griddle used in Sweden to make *plättar* (page 224) or small pancakes.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 20 tuiles

150 g/5 oz (1 stick 2½ tablespoons) butter, melted, plus soft butter for the griddle
85 g/3 oz (¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
2 eggs
90 g/3¼ oz (¾ cup) plain (all-purpose) flour
2 tablespoons chopped hazelnuts
2 tablespoons pearl sugar

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7 and place the pancake griddle inside the oven.

Pour the butter into the bowl of a stand mixer and add the sugar. Whisk until frothy before adding the eggs, one at a time. Sift in the flour and stir well at medium speed, still using the whisk, just long enough to fully incorporate the flour.

Butter the pancake griddle lightly, spoon some batter into each round and sprinkle with chopped hazelnuts and pearl sugar. Put the griddle back in the oven and bake for 5–8 minutes, or until golden.

Remove the tuiles with a small spatula and wrap around a bottle or rolling pin to form an arc and leave to cool. Repeat with the remaining batter.

FAROESE TUILES

Góðaráð (Faroe Islands)

Góðaráð means 'good advice' in Faroese, or 'tasty wafers'. It's a very witty name for a pastry. As with other tuiles, you need a tuile iron (electric or stovetop) to make them. Serve with some berries or jam (pages 510–11) on the side, as a dessert or as a snack with coffee.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: about 20 tuiles, depending on the size of your wafer iron

220 g/7¾ oz (2 sticks) butter, plus extra to grease
400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) milk or water
3 eggs
220 g/7¾ oz (1 cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
200 g/7 oz (1¼ cups) potato starch
200 g/7 oz (1⅔ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 tablespoon vanilla sugar

Combine the butter and milk or water in a pan and heat until the butter has melted. Leave to cool to room temperature.

Whisk the eggs and sugar together in a bowl until pale and creamy, then add the cooled butter and milk/water mixture and stir until smooth. Sift the potato starch, flour and the vanilla sugar together into the liquid and whisk gently until fully incorporated.

Heat the tuile iron to a medium temperature. Brush it lightly with butter, then add a spoonful of batter to the iron and press it together immediately. If you are using an electric iron, cook it until the tuile has a light amber colour. If you are using a stovetop model, flip it over immediately after pressing, so that you get the wafer evenly browned.

When the tuile is cooked, remove it from the iron and transfer to a wire rack to cool. Repeat with the remaining batter.

OAT TUILES

Havreflarn (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 25 tuiles

75 g/2¾ oz (5 tablespoons) butter
90 g/3¼ oz (½ cup) sugar
30 g/1 oz (⅓ cup) rolled oats
60 g/2¼ oz (½ cup) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
2 tablespoons cream
2 tablespoons golden syrup

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Melt the butter in a pan over a medium heat, lower the heat and add the rest of the ingredients while stirring. Use about 1 tablespoon of the batter for each tuile, scooping it onto the prepared baking sheets. Don't place the scoops too close to one another because they will spread out while baking.

Bake for about 8 minutes. The tuiles should be golden but not too dark. If you like, you can shape the tuiles as soon as you remove them from the oven. Wrap them around a bottle or a rolling pin to form an arc shape and leave them there to cool completely. If you don't want to shape them, just let them cool on the baking sheets.

MERINGUE

Pikekyss (Norway)
Marenki (Finland)
Marengs kys (Denmark)
Maräng (Sweden)

This is a good base recipe for meringue, although the baking temperature and cooking time vary, depending on what you are trying to achieve.

If you want to make snowy-white meringues, then bake them at 110°C/225°F/Gas Mark ¼. If you prefer them golden, then bake them at 140°C/275°F/Gas Mark 1 first, until they have the colour you want, then lower the temperature to 110°C/225°F/Gas Mark ¼ to finish. The cooking time depends on how dry you want your meringues to be. Sometimes a chewy meringue is pretty delicious, but sometimes you want them to be bone-dry, which will take overnight.

As egg sizes vary so much, it is best to weigh out the correct amount of egg whites for this recipe. Also, I prefer to use egg whites that have been standing, uncovered, in a bowl for a few days so that they have dried out a bit. This makes the meringue much more stable.

Preparation time: 10 minutes
Cooking time: 1–15 hours depending on what you are going to do with it and the size of the meringue

160 g/5½ oz egg whites
200 g/7 oz (1 cup) sugar

Preheat the oven to 110°C/225°F/Gas Mark ½ and line several baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Place the egg whites in the spotlessly clean and dry bowl of a stand mixer (or a large stainless steel mixing bowl) and start whisking them slowly until they begin to foam. Add the sugar, little by little, making sure you leave enough time between each addition for the sugar crystals to dissolve completely. For meringue perfection, it is important not to hurry too much, or to whisk too quickly, or to add the sugar too fast, as this will result in more of a runny fluff, with less of the velvety, brilliant, shiny quality that really good meringue has.

After you have added about half of the sugar – let's say it takes you about 5 minutes – you can start whisking at a faster speed and adding the sugar at a slightly faster pace. When all the sugar has been added, lower the speed again and keep whisking the meringue slowly until all the sugar crystals have dissolved and the meringue looks like fresh white paint, in both brilliance and shine. It should be very stiff.

Pipe, spoon or otherwise shape the stiff meringue straight onto the prepared baking sheets in whatever form you feel like, or the recipe you are making calls for.

A small meringue, the size of a walnut, will cook in about an hour and a really big thick one, the size of a grapefruit might not really fully cook at all but always remain a little chewy inside.

Place the meringue in the oven and if you have a fan (convection) one, turn the fan off, otherwise your meringue will blow around as it dries up and lightens.

Cook until the meringue is as dry or chewy you want it to be. Store in airtight containers.

ALMOND MERINGUES

Mandelmaränger (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 10 fist-sized meringues

1 quantity Meringue (page 355)
a few drops of bitter almond oil
100 g/3½ oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons)
  flaked almonds
50 g/2 oz (2½ tablespoons) golden syrup

Preheat the oven to 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper. (The temperature is slightly higher for this recie because they should be slightly browned.)

Follow the instructions for making the meringue (page 355). When the meringue is just finishing being whisked and is very stiff, add the almond oil and make sure it's completely mixed in. Sprinkle the flaked almonds on the meringue and drizzle with the golden syrup. Fold in using a rubber spatula, but don't mix too well because it should be marbled with syrup and almonds. Spoon 10 large dollops onto the prepared baking sheet and bake for 50 minutes until it is a very light golden colour. Leave the meringues to cool before removing from the sheet.

STRIPED PEPPERMINT CANDY MERINGUES

Polkagrismaränger (Sweden)

These meringues are seasoned with the strong mint of classic Swedish Striped Peppermint Sticks (page 392). In my opinion, these should be made large (we are talking fist-sized) just like the chocolate meringues opposite.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Makes: 10 fist-sized meringues

1 quantity Meringue (page 355)
120 g/4 oz Striped Peppermint Sticks (page
  392), crushed into 5-mm/¼-inch pieces
a few drops red food colouring

Preheat the oven to 125°C/257°F/Gas Mark ¼ and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Follow the instructions for making the meringue (page 355). When the meringue is just finishing being whisked and is very stiff, sprinkle the crushed candy over the meringue and drizzle with a few drops of food colouring. Fold in using a rubber spatula, but don't mix too well because it should be marbled with the red colour. Spoon 10 large dollops onto the prepared baking sheet and bake for 1 hour. Leave the meringues to down before removing from the sheet.

CHOCOLATE MERINGUES

Chokladmaränger (Sweden)

Don't make these too small. I like them fist-sized and baked for about an hour at 125°C/257°F/Gas Mark ¼ so that they are still a little chewy inside. If you want them entirely crisp, follow the instructions for baking in the basic meringue recipe on page 355.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
  10 minutes
Makes: 10 fist-sized meringues

1 quantity Meringue (page 355)
75 g/2¾ oz dark (semisweet) chocolate,
  melted (pages 80–83)

Preheat the oven to 125°C/257°F/Gas Mark ¼ and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Follow the instructions for making the meringue (page 355). When the meringue is just finishing being whisked and is very stiff, drizzle the melted chocolate over it. Fold in using a rubber spatula, but don't mix too well because it should be marbled with the chocolate. Spoon 10 large dollops of the meringue onto the prepared baking sheet and bake for 1 hour. Leave the meringues to cool before removing from the sheet.

For image see page opposite

Chocolate Meringues (page 356)

SUPER-FAST, IF-YOU-GET-UNEXPECTED-GUESTS BUNS

Hastbullar (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 20 buns

300 g/11 oz (2½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
2½ teaspoons baking powder
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar
½ teaspoon finely ground cardamom seeds
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, cold and diced
200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) milk
1 egg
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)

To decorate
pearl sugar, to taste
finely chopped almonds, to taste

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and place 20 individual paper bun cases on a baking sheet.

Mix all of the dry ingredients together in a bowl. Add the butter and mix with your fingers until crumbly. Finish by adding the milk and egg and stir until just combined. Spoon the dough equally among the paper bun cases.

Brush the buns lightly with the egg wash and sprinkle some pearl sugar and chopped almonds on top. Bake for about 10 minutes, or until light golden. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

BITTER ALMOND SHORT BUNS

Mandelkubb (Sweden)

These little buns, flavoured with bitter almond oil or grated bitter almonds, are leavened with baker's ammonia. They should have a short texture as is typical for most other pastries leavened with baker's ammonia. They must be consumed pretty much the same day they are baked because they dry out and go stale very quickly.

Let the buns cool down completely on a wire rack before eating them or storing them so that the ammonia can vent off properly. Otherwise they can have a very unpleasant odour.

Preparation and cooking time: 40 minutes
Makes: 15–20 buns

450 g/1 lb (3¾ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
150 g/5 oz (⅔ cup) sugar
2 teaspoons baker's ammonia
6 bitter almonds, very finely grated (or use bitter almond oil, as instructed on the bottle)
150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons) butter, coarsely chopped, at room temperature
150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) milk
1 egg
pearl sugar and/or chopped almonds, to decorate

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Sift the flour, sugar and baker's ammonia together into a large bowl, then add the bitter almonds or bitter almond oil. Add the butter and mix with your hands to a crumbly texture.

In a separate bowl, mix the milk with the egg and add to the bowl containing the dry ingredients. Mix with your hands until you get a smooth dough, but do not overwork it.

On a lightly floured work counter, roll the dough out to a cylinder about 50 cm/20 inches in length and then cut it into 15–20 equal pieces. Shape each piece into a roughly square, slightly flattened bun.

Spread the pearl sugar or chopped almonds out on a plate. Press one side of each bun into the pearl sugar and/or chopped almonds and arrange, that side up, on the prepared baking sheets. Leave enough space between them because they will expand a bit.

Bake until they are light golden; they shouldn't get too much colour. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

KROKAN CAKE

Krokaani (Finland)
Krokan (Sweden)

Krokan is a traditional pastry sometimes served at weddings in Sweden. It resembles the Almond Wreath Cake (page 462) common in other Nordic countries in the sense that it is based on almond paste with the addition of egg white, and in the way that it is assembled in tiers to sometimes quite imposing heights. However, the Swedish *krokan* is piped out into bows that are glued together with melted sugar rather than the round wreaths of the Almond Wreath Cake, which are stacked on top of each other in a more compact way. The Swedish ones are also baked until dry as opposed to the ones in other countries, which have a moist centre. A *krokan* usually has three tiers whilst an Almond Wreath Cake usually has more.

Today the *krokan* is on the brink of extinction since more international-style wedding cakes have pushed it out of fashion.

If you are to venture into the world of *krokan* baking you will need more guidance than I have space to give in this book but I have included a recipe on the batter below anyhow so that you can understand at least the proportions and basic technique of making them.

Preparation and cooking time: a very long time
Makes: enough for a wedding of 50 guests

5 kg/11 lb Almond Paste (page 531), grated
10 egg whites
350 g/12 oz (1¾ cups) sugar

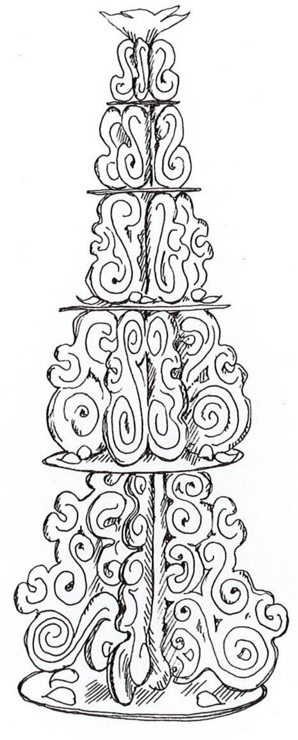
Preheat the oven to 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2.

Mix the almond paste and egg whites together in a large bowl to obtain a smooth but stiff batter. Transfer the batter to a piping (pastry) bag fitted with a star nozzle and pipe it out onto a sheet of baking (parchment) paper. Step-by-step designs for *krokans* can be found on the internet to be printed and used as templates for the piping. The best way of using them is to print them on ordinary paper and place that under the baking paper onto which you pipe the batter.

Bake all the parts until golden and quite dry. Remove from the oven and leave them to cool down.

To melt the sugar, carefully heat it over a medium heat in a suitable pot and do not stir until all the sugar has melted and started to caramelize. If you stir it, mixing melted and non-melted sugar, it tends to form lumps, which are difficult to melt. When the sugar has started browning and smells of caramel, quickly dip the bottom of the pan in some cold water to stop the cooking process.

Use the melted sugar to 'glue' the *krokan* parts together. As you assemble the *krokan*, if the sugar cools down and stiffens, simply reheat it a bit.



MUFFINS AND INDIVIDUAL PASTRIES

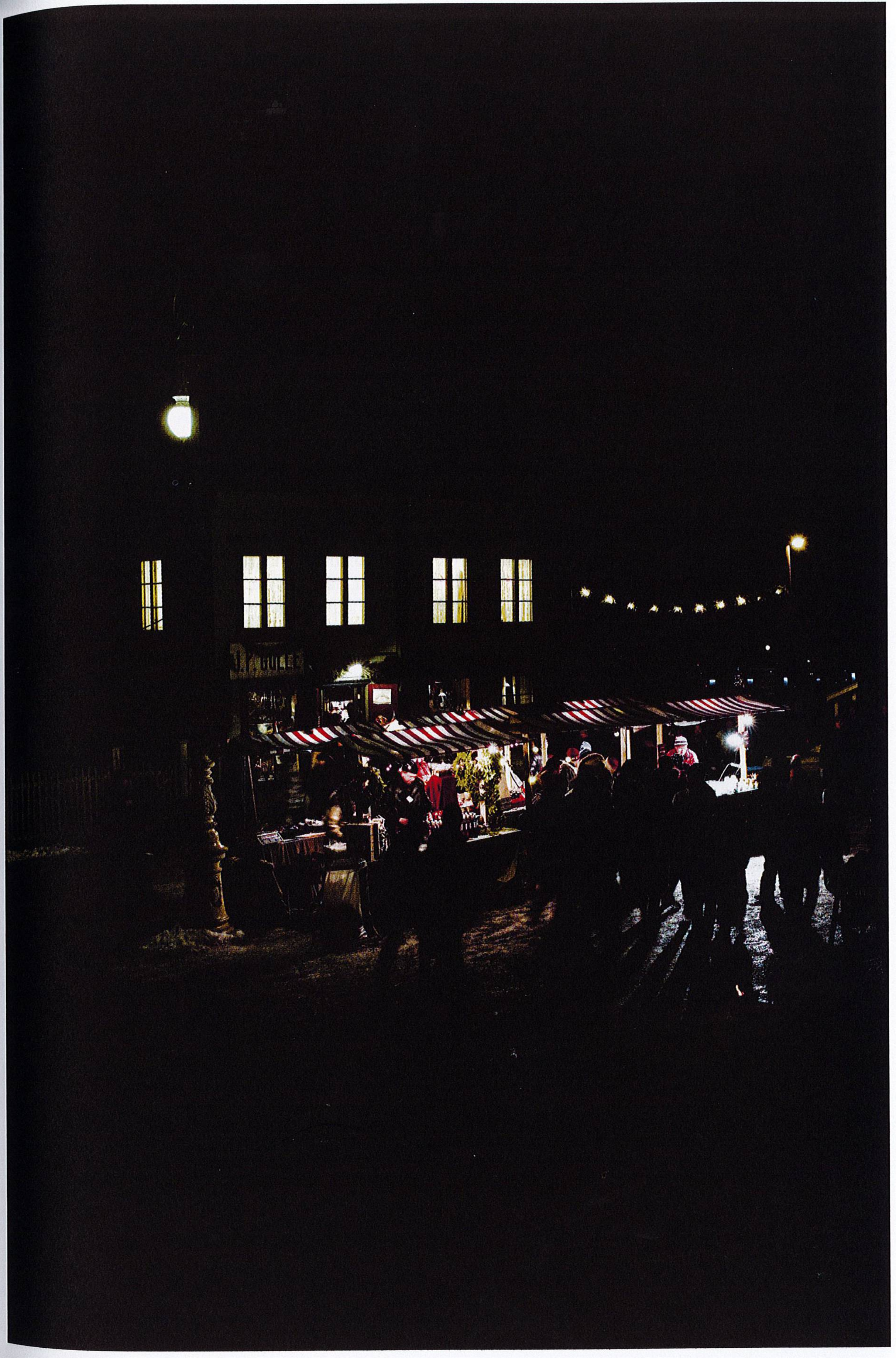
Previous page: Reindeer, close to North Cape, Norway, winter 2013.

For me, muffins are memories of being a child and growing up. Memories of kitchens smelling great and licking the bowl after not-too-meticulously scraping the batter into little paper cups. Muffins were some of the first things I baked on my own when I was around 10 years old and allowed to operate the oven by myself.

In the Nordics muffins are similar but different from what is referred to as cupcakes in most parts of the world. They are essentially any cake baked as an individual pastry in a paper casing instead of in a pan. Rarely are the casings filled to the point where the batter can rise over the edge and make that hat that cupcakes often have. Because they are not supposed to be very high we do not use a muffin pan. This might seem a bit counter-intuitive to all you cupcake bakers out there, but using one will mess the recipe up. Our American recipe tester used a muffin pan and the recipes just didn't work. We could not understand why as they worked when we baked and photographed them in Sweden. It turns out that the pan (as it is designed to do) prevents the paper casings from collapsing outwards. This makes the cupcake in a pan about 30 per cent higher but narrower than one without. The layer of metal also takes time to heat up in the oven, so the short cooking time indicated in the recipes is used partially to heat the pan before the pan starts heating the batter. These two things together make for recipe malfunction. If you really want to use a cupcake pan and make taller muffins, just adjust the temperature and time accordingly. It will need to be a bit lower and will take longer to bake through properly.

Muffins in the Nordics are rarely decorated with icing, at least not the way cupcakes are. If there is something on top, it would be White Icing (page 530) with a bit of lemon juice in it, but no sprinkles, absolutely no sprinkles.

Opposite: Christmas fair, Jamtli, Sweden 2017.



MUFFINS, BASIC RECIPE

Muffins, grundrecept (Sweden)

This is a basic recipe for muffins that you can serve plain or filled with pretty much anything you want.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 10 muffins

100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter
200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) milk
zest of 1 lemon
2 eggs
150 g/5 oz (¾ cup) sugar
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
240 g/8½ oz (2 cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
pinch of salt

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Place 10 individual paper muffin cases on a baking sheet.

Melt the butter in a small pan over a medium heat. Remove the pan from the heat and add the milk and lemon zest.

Place the eggs, sugar and vanilla sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat until pale and fluffy. Add the butter and milk mixture to the bowl and mix until combined.

Mix the flour, baking powder and salt together in a separate bowl and sift it into the batter. Stir gently until just combined.

Scoop the batter into the prepared cases so they are three quarters full and bake for 10 minutes.

For image see page 369

GINGERBREAD MUFFINS

Kryddiga Muffins (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 10 muffins

50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter
150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) milk
1 egg
2 tablespoons lingonberry jam
(pages 510–11)
3 tablespoons golden syrup
175 g/6 oz (1½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar
1 teaspoon ground cassia cinnamon
1 teaspoon cloves, crushed
½ teaspoon ground ginger
2 teaspoons baking powder

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Place 10 individual paper muffin cases on a baking sheet.

Melt the butter in a small pan over a medium heat. Remove the pan from the heat and add the milk, egg, jam and golden syrup. Stir until well mixed.

Mix all of the dry ingredients together in a separate bowl, then add the butter and milk mixture to the bowl and stir until well combined.

Scoop the batter into the prepared cases and bake for 15 minutes.

BLUEBERRY MUFFINS

Blåbärsmuffins (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 10 muffins

100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter
200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) milk
zest of 1 lemon
2 eggs
150 g/5 oz (¾ cup) sugar
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
240 g/8½ oz (2 cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
pinch of salt
200 g/7 oz (1⅔ cups) blueberries,
fresh or frozen

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Place 10 individual paper muffin cases on a baking sheet.

Melt the butter in a small pan over a medium heat. Remove the pan from the heat and add the milk and lemon zest.

Place the eggs, sugar and vanilla sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat until pale and fluffy. Add the butter and milk mixture to the bowl.

Mix the flour, baking powder and salt together in a separate bowl and sift it into the batter. Stir gently until just combined. Add the blueberries to the batter. You don't have to defrost them if you use frozen blueberries. Don't stir too much otherwise the batter will turn blue.

Scoop the batter into the prepared cases so they are three quarters full and bake for 12 minutes.

APPLE AND CINNAMON MUFFINS

Äpple- och kanelmuffins (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 10 muffins

100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter
200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) milk
zest of 1 lemon
2 eggs
150 g/5 oz (¾ cup) sugar
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
240 g/8½ oz (2 cups) weak (soft)
wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
pinch of salt

For the filling
25 g/1 oz (2 tablespoons) butter
2 apples, peeled, cored and diced
2 teaspoons ground cassia cinnamon
2 tablespoons sugar

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Place 10 individual paper muffin cases on a baking sheet.

Make the filling by melting the butter in a pan over a medium heat. Add the diced apples, the cinnamon and sugar and cook for a few minutes until the apples get a bit soft.

Melt the remaining butter in a small pan over a medium heat. Remove the pan from the heat, add the milk and lemon zest and mix until combined.

Place the eggs, sugar and vanilla sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat until pale and fluffy. Add the butter and milk mixture to the bowl.

Mix the flour, baking powder and salt together in a separate bowl and sift it into the batter. Stir gently until just combined. Add the apples to the batter and stir in gently.

Scoop the batter into the prepared cases so they are three quarters full and bake for 15 minutes.

APPLE AND CINNAMON MUFFINS WITH CRUMBLE

Äppelmuffins med smul (Sweden)

One of my favourites, it's a little more decadent than an Apple and Cinnamon Muffin (left). Make a half quantity of the Crumble, Base Recipe (page 480) and spread it out over the muffins just before they go into the oven. There is no need to adjust the baking time or temperature.

For image see page 369

OAT MUFFINS

Havremuffins (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 12 muffins

- 80 g/3 oz (5⅓ tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
- 90 g/3¼ oz (⅓ cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
- 75 ml/2½ fl oz (5 tablespoons) milk
- 1 egg
- 60 g/2¼ oz (½ cup) weak (soft) wheat flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 50 g/2 oz (½ cup) rolled oats
- 100 g/3½ oz (¾ cup plus 2 teaspoons) blueberries, fresh or frozen

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Place 12 individual paper muffin cases on a baking sheet.

Place the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat at medium speed until pale and fluffy. Add the milk and egg while beating at a lower speed.

Mix the flour and baking powder together in a separate bowl and sift it into the batter. Add the oats and stir until combined. Add the blueberries and stir a little more.

Scoop the batter into the prepared cases so they are three quarters full and bake for 15 minutes.

For image see page opposite

COCONUT MUFFINS

Kokosmuffins (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 10 muffins

- 100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter
- 200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) milk
- 2 eggs
- 150 g/5 oz (¾ cup) sugar
- 1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
- 150 g/5 oz (1¼ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- pinch of salt
- 100 g/3½ oz (1¼ cups) desiccated coconut

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Place 10 individual paper muffin cases on a baking sheet.

Melt the butter in a small pan over a medium heat. Remove the pan from the heat and add the milk.

Place the eggs, sugar and vanilla sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment and beat until pale and fluffy. Add the butter and milk mixture to the bowl and mix until combined.

Mix the flour, baking powder and salt in a separate bowl and sift it into the batter. Add the coconut and stir gently until just combined.

Scoop the batter into the prepared cases so they are three quarters full and bake for 12 minutes.

For image see page opposite

Top to bottom: Muffins, Basic Recipe (page 366); Apple and Cinnamon Muffins with Crumble (page 367); Swedish Gooey Chocolate Cake Muffins (page 370); Coconut Muffins (page 368); Oat Muffins (page 368)

SWEDISH GOOEY CHOCOLATE CAKE MUFFINS

Kladdkaksmuffins (Sweden)

This is a real gem and a favourite of my kids. Make one batch of Swedish Gooey Chocolate Cake batter (page 432) and divide it among 10 individual paper muffin cases placed on a baking sheet. When cooking these muffins it is very important to get the right level of gooeyness to compensate for the difference in size between these individual ones and the original cake pan. Increase the temperature to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7 and bake for 4–5 minutes. The muffins should not set completely.

For image see page 369

FINNISH LEMON MUFFINS / BUNS

Sitruunapullat (Finland)
Citronbullar (Sweden)

These small lemon sponge cake muffins, which are very popular all over Finland – both to bake at home but also to buy ready-made – are called lemon buns in Finnish. However, they haven't really got anything to do with buns in the sense that they are not made with a leavened yeast dough but rather a cake batter.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 12 muffins

250 g/9 oz (2¼ sticks) butter, at room temperature, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
220 g/7¾ oz (1 cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
4 eggs
juice and zest of 1 lemon
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 teaspoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
280 g/10 oz (2⅓ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter 12 individual cake pans or 12 individual paper muffin cases and coat with breadcrumbs.

Place the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat until pale and fluffy. Add the eggs, one by one, then add the lemon juice and zest. Add all of the dry ingredients by sifting them together into the bowl and work until well combined. Don't overwork though as this will make the texture less good. Pour the batter into the prepared individual cake pans or muffin cases and bake for 15 minutes, or until lightly golden.

FINNISH COMB PASTRIES

Nisu / Kampanisu (Finland)
Kamnisu (Sweden)

This classic comb-shaped Finnish pastry originates in the west Finnish region of Ostrobothnia. It is essentially a flaky shortbread. Today *nisu* dough often contains sugar and cream, but in historical recipes the dough was pretty much just butter and flour and any sugar one might splurge and add was done so as a seasoning on the outside of the cookie.

Preparation cooking time: 20 minutes
Makes: 40 pastries

250 g/9 oz (2¼ sticks) butter
180 g/6½ oz (1 cup) sugar
200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) sour cream
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)
1 egg
650 g/1 lb 7 oz (5 cups plus 3 tablespoons) plain (all-purpose) flour

Place all of the ingredients, except the flour, in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the knife attachment and mix until well combined. Add the flour and pulse until the dough just comes together. Do not overmix as you will get less good texture.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Scrape the dough onto a work counter and roll it out into a 1-cm/½-inch thick rectangle. Cut it into 40 smaller rectangles of about 5 x 8 cm/2 x 3 inches and then make 5 cuts into the longer side of each one. The cuts should reach about one-third of the way into the rectangle.

Place each piece on the prepared baking sheets and bake for 8 minutes, or until golden.

FINNISH PUFF PASTRY AND PLUM STARS

Joulutorttu (Finland)
Julstjärnor (Sweden)

These simple, star-shaped puff pastry pastries are indispensable to a Finnish Christmas celebration. I never make puff pastry at home, as it's one of those things that is just better done in large batches in a temperature-controlled pastry shop. If you want to, please do try to make your own puff pastry by following the recipe on pages 542–3, otherwise do like I do and visit a very good pastry shop and ask them if you can buy some. Make sure to go straight home so that the butter doesn't melt out of the dough.

Preparation and cooking time: 50 minutes
Makes: 30–40 stars

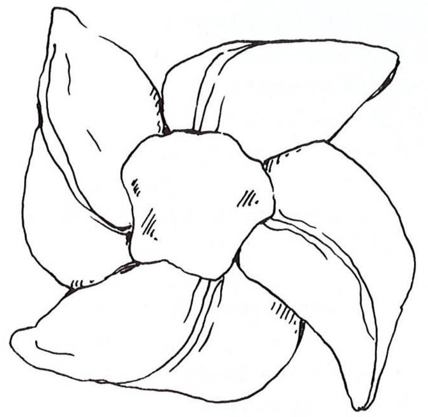
1 kg/2¼ lb Puff Pastry (pages 542–3)
250 g/9 oz (1 cup) plum jam (pages 510–11)

Roll the puff pastry out to a thickness of 1 cm/½ inch and cut it into 8-cm/3-inch squares. Make a cut from the corner of a square and towards the middle, stopping 1.5 cm/⅝ inch from the very centre, and repeat on all 4 corners of each square. This should result in each square having a square of uncut dough in the middle, 3 cm/1¼ inches across diagonally and 4 flaps of dough attached to that square. Each flap has 2 outward-facing points. Counting clockwise, pull the first point of each flap towards the middle of the uncut square so that half of the flap folds over itself. When all 4 points are joined together in the middle, press down a little so that they attach to the square.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Place each piece of puff pastry on the prepared baking sheet and repeat until all the puff pastry has been used up.

Place a spoon of plum jam in the middle of each pastry, covering the part where the 4 points attach to each other.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Bake for 10–15 minutes, or until deep golden. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.



DANISH PASTRY

Vinarbreyð (Faroe Islands)
Vínarbrauð (Iceland)
Wienerleipä (Finland)
Basser / Wienerbrød (Denmark)
Wienerbröd (Sweden)

The Danish Pastry, or 'Danish', is actually only called this in the English-speaking world. In the Nordic countries it is know as Viennese bread and in most Germanic countries it is often called something that relates to the city of Copenhagen. The dough used for making Danish pastries is based on the Viennoise dough, which is a leavened type of puff pastry containing eggs. There are conflicting stories of exactly how and when the Danish was invented, but they all agree on one thing: the origins of this pastry, now intimately connected to Denmark, and especially to Copenhagen, are in Austria. It was brought to the Nordic region 130–150 years ago and since then it has been adapted to suit the Nordic taste, becoming a bit sweeter and a bit richer than the original.

When you make Danish pastries it is an advantage to do it in a cool environment and with cool equipment: a chilled stone or marble work counter in a refrigerated space would be ideal, but opening your kitchen window on a chilly autumn (fall) morning shortly before you start also works. It is also a good idea to refrigerate equipment like rolling pins and knives, before starting. If you work really quickly, none of these precautions are necessary. But if not, they will buy you some extra time before the butter melts as you work it, turning your ambitious baking project into something that needs to be disposed in your compost bin, rather than baked in your oven.

Preparation and resting time: 2 hours
Makes: enough for 20 pastries

500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) cold milk
25 g/1 oz fresh yeast (pages 58–61)
40 g/1½ oz (3 tablespoons) sugar
4 eggs
1 teaspoon salt
1.2 kg/2½ lb (8¾ cups plus 1 tablespoon) strong wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
1 kg/2¼ lb (9 sticks) butter, cut into 1-cm/½-inch thick slices

Combine the milk, yeast, sugar, eggs, salt and flour in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook. Mix at medium speed until the dough is smooth and shiny. Cover the bowl and place in the refrigerator to rest for an hour.

Roll the dough out on a lightly floured work counter to a 60 x 45 cm/24 x 18 inch rectangle. Place the cold sliced butter onto the half of the rectangle closest to you, leaving a 3 cm/1¼ inch edge of dough around the buttered part. Fold the butterless half of dough towards you over the butter and crimp the edges using the spare 3 cm/1¼ inch.

The 45-cm/18-inch seam should now point towards you, if not then correct that. Roll the dough out evenly to a thickness of 2 cm/¾ inch. Roll in one direction only and maintain the width of the rectangle at 45 cm/18 inches.

Now imagine the rectangle being made up of 3 smaller rectangles beginning closest to you, and fold the closest imaginary rectangle away from you so that it covers the second one. Subsequently fold the third imaginary rectangle towards you so that it covers both the previous ones and makes 3 layers of dough. Again, turn the dough so that its short side faces you.

Once again, roll the dough out evenly to a thickness of 2 cm/¾ inch. This time you can roll in both directions, but try not to exceed the dimensions of the first rectangle (60 x 45 cm/24 x 18 inches).

Repeat the folding in thirds, turning and rolling process twice more. If the butter seems to be melting at any stage, then place the dough in the refrigerator to chill again before you resume rolling.

Once you've rolled the pastry out to a rectangle for the third time, cover it with a clean dish towel and refrigerate for 30 minutes to rest before proceeding with any of the following pastries.

Clockwise from top left: The Cockerel's Crest (page 376); Spandauer (page 374); Trekant (page 378); Danish Cinnamon Snail (page 374)

DANISH CINNAMON SNAIL

Snegle (Denmark)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Rising time: 45 minutes
Makes: 20 pastries

1 quantity Danish Pastry (page 372)
1 quantity Brown Sugar Pastry Filling (page 530), flavoured with 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1 quantity Chocolate Icing (page 530)

Roll the dough out into a rectangle about 5 mm/¼ inch in thickness.

Spread the filling onto the rolled-out dough and roll it tightly together into a log. Refrigerate.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Once chilled, cut the roll into twenty 3-cm/1¼-inch slices, place the slices on the prepared baking sheets and leave them to come to room temperature and rise a bit – it will take about 45 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Bake for about 12 minutes, or until golden. Leave to cool on the baking sheets before transferring to wire racks. Decorate with chocolate icing.

For image see page 373

SPANDAUER

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Rising time: 20 minutes
Makes: 20 pastries

1 quantity Danish Pastry (page 372)
1 tablespoon Vanilla Custard / Pastry Cream (page 533) or raspberry jam (pages 510–11)
1 quantity White Icing (page 530)

Roll the dough out into a rectangle of about 1 cm/½ inch in thickness and cut it into twenty 12-cm/4-inch squares, spoon the pastry cream or jam on to each square, fold the corners in towards the middle and squeeze them together.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Transfer the folded squares to the prepared baking sheets and leave for 20 minutes to rise.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 8. Bake for about 12 minutes, or until golden. Leave to cool on wire racks. Decorate with icing.

For image see page 373

POPPY SEED DANISH

Birkes (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Rising time: 20 minutes
Makes: 20 pastries

1 quantity Danish Pastry (page 372)
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)
poppy seeds, to coat

Cut the Danish pastry dough in half and roll it out into 2 rectangles about 5 mm/¼ inch in thickness and 20 cm/7¾ inches in width and about 40–50 cm/15–19½ inches in length. Fold a third of the width towards the middle and continue folding it one more time so that you get a sort of flat roll 40–50 cm/15–19½ inches in length. Cut each roll into 10 slices. Brush the top of the slices lightly with egg wash.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Invert the slices onto a plate of poppy seeds and then place them poppy-seed side up on the prepared baking sheets. Leave to rise for 20 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Bake for 12 minutes, or until golden. Leave to cool on the baking sheets.

For image see page 377

FILLED POPPY SEED DANISH / COPENHAGEN BIRKES

Köpenhamnsbirkes (Sweden)

The fancier big city, almond-filled version of the classic Poppy Seed Danish (opposite).

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Rising time: 20 minutes
Makes: 20 pastries

1 quantity Danish Pastry (page 372)
1 quantity White Sugar Pastry Filling (page 530)
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)
poppy seeds, to coat

Cut the Danish pastry dough in half and roll it out into 2 rectangles about 5 mm/¼ inch in thickness, 20 cm/7¾ inches in width and about 40–50 cm/15–19½ inches in length. Spread with the pastry filling, then fold a third of the width towards the middle and continue folding it one more time so that you get a sort of flat roll 40–50 cm/15–19½ inches in length. Cut each roll into 10 slices and brush the top of the slices lightly with egg wash.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Invert the slices onto a plate of poppy seeds, then place them poppy seed-side up on the prepared baking sheets. Leave to rise for 20 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Bake for 12 minutes, or until golden. Leave to cool on the baking sheets.

FILLED DANISH PASTRY BRAID

Borgmesterstang (Denmark)
Wienerlängd (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Rising time: 20 minutes
Makes: 2 pastry braids / loaves

1 quantity Danish Pastry (page 372)
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)
chopped almonds, for sprinkling

For the filling
200 g/7 oz Almond Paste (pages 73–4)
2 egg whites
75 g/2¾ oz (⅓ cup plus ½ tablespoon) sugar

To make the filling, mix the almond paste, egg whites and sugar in a bowl.

Divide the dough in half and roll it out into 2 rectangles 5 mm/¼ inch thick and 20 cm/7¾ inches wide. Cut each rectangle into 3 long strips and pipe a string of filling along the length of each strip. Fold each strip over the filling and press the edges firmly to seal them. Braid 3 filled and sealed strips to make a loaf. Repeat with the remaining 3 strips to make the second loaf.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Place the loaves on the prepared baking sheets and leave them to rise for 20 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Brush the dough with egg wash and sprinkle with chopped almonds. Bake for about 20 minutes or until golden. Leave to cool on the baking sheets before attempting to move them.

For image see page 377

THE COCKEREL'S CREST

Hanekam (Denmark)
Kammar (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Rising time: 20 minutes
Makes: 20 pastries

1 quantity Danish Pastry (page 372)
1 quantity White Sugar Pastry Filling (page 530)
Egg Wash (pages 73–4)
pearl sugar or flaked almonds, for sprinkling

Cut the Danish pastry dough in half and roll it out into 2 rectangles about 5 mm/¼ inch in thickness. Cut the rectangles with a sharp knife into 10 cm/4 inch squares.

Place a tablespoonful of filling across the middle of each square and fold it once so that it turns into a 5 x 10 cm/2 x 4 inch rectangle. Press the edges firmly together and cut 5 slashes so that it resembles a cockerel's crest.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Place the *hanekam* on the prepared baking sheets and allow to rise for about 20 minutes.

Brush the dough with the egg wash and sprinkle with pearl sugar or flaked almonds.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Bake for 12 minutes or until golden. Leave to cool on the baking sheets.

For image see page 373

JULEBOLLE

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Rising time: 20 minutes
Makes: 20 pastries

1 quantity Danish Pastry (page 372)
1 quantity White Icing (page 530) or Chocolate Icing (page 530)

For the filling
100 g/3½ oz Almond Paste (page 531)
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar

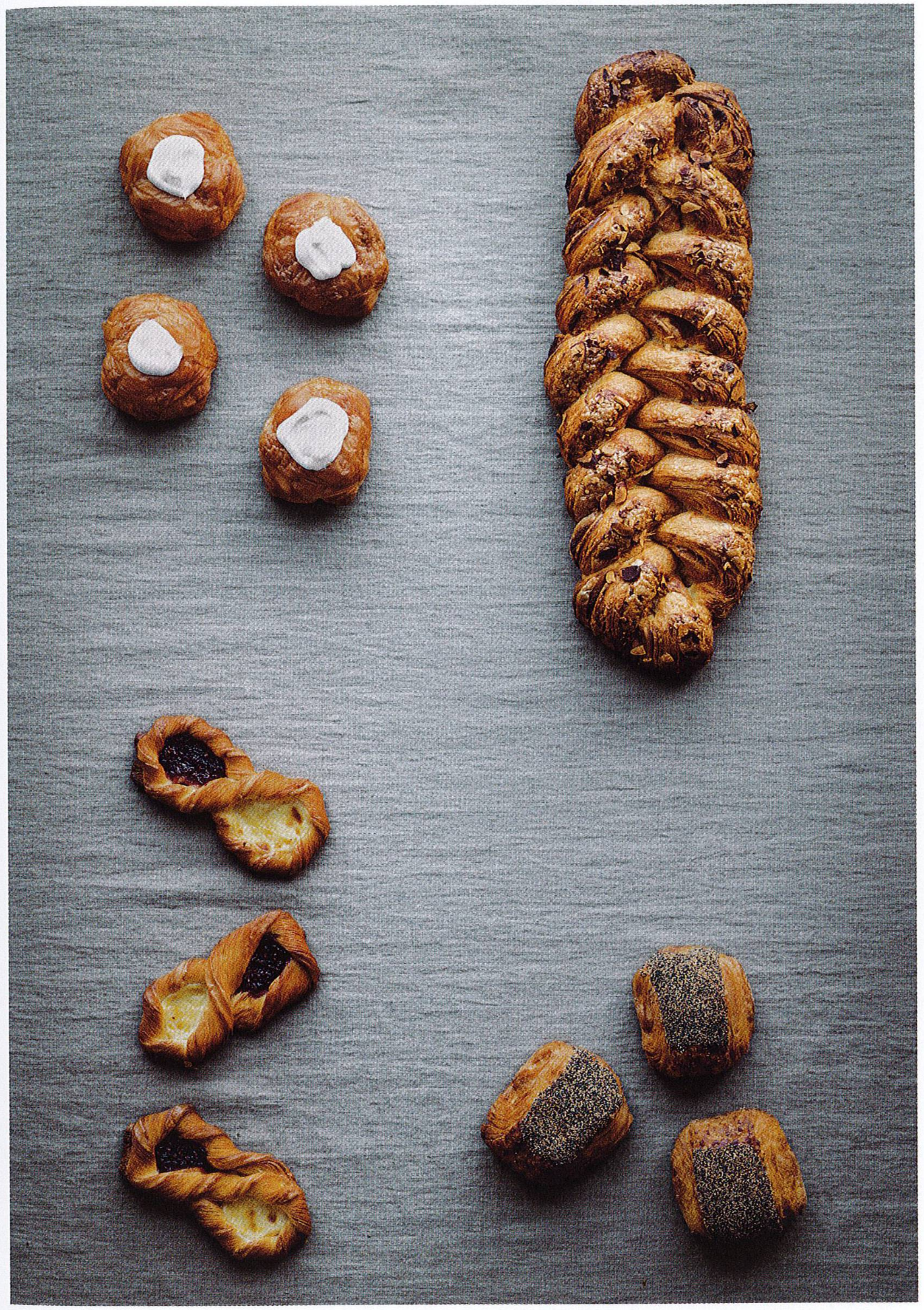
To make the filling, mix the almond paste, butter and sugar to a paste in a bowl.

Roll the Danish pastry dough out into a rectangle about 1 cm/½ inch in thickness and cut it into twenty 12 cm/4¾ inch squares.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Place a tablespoonful of the paste onto each square, fold the corners in towards the middle and squeeze them together to seal. Invert and transfer to the prepared baking sheets so that the seam faces downwards and leave for 20 minutes to rise.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Bake for about 12 minutes or until golden. Leave to cool on wire racks. Decorate with white or chocolate icing.

For image see page opposite



Clockwise from top left: Julebolle (page 376); Filled Danish Pastry Braid (page 375); Poppy Seed Danish (page 374); Danishes Filled with Vanilla Custard and Raspberry Jam (page 378)

TREKANT

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Rising time: 20 minutes
Makes: 20 pastries

1 quantity Danish Pastry (page 372)

For the filling
100 g/3½ oz Almond Paste (page 531)
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar

To make the filling, mix the almond paste, butter and sugar to a paste in a bowl.

Divide the dough in half and roll it out into 2 rectangles about 5 mm/¼ inches in thickness. Cut with a sharp knife into twenty 10 cm/4 inch squares.

Place a tablespoonful of the paste in the middle of each square. Fold the dough once across the filling diagonally and press the edges firmly together to seal.

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Place the *trekant* on the prepared baking sheets and allow to rise for about 20 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 8. Bake for 12 minutes or until golden. Allow to cool on the baking sheets.

For image see page 373

ROSENBRØD

Whether there should be Danish dough at the base of a *rosenbrød* seems to be a matter of some debate in Denmark. It can also be a simple leavened, slightly shortened yeast dough rolled into the same shape as I am about to describe here. Anyhow, this text is about different shapes of Danish. To use Danish dough to make *rosenbrød* seems to be largely a Sjælland thing. Sjælland is the island on which Copenhagen is located.

Preparation and cooking time: 40 minutes
Rising time: 20 minutes
Makes: 8 pastries

1 quantity Danish Pastry (page 372)
1 quantity White Icing (page 530), flavoured
with 2 drops rosewater

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Roll the dough out into 2 rectangles of about 20 x 50 cm/7¾ x 11¾ inches. Place them on the prepared baking sheets and leave to rise for about 20 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Bake for 12–15 minutes, or until golden. Leave to cool on the baking sheets.

Glaze the entire top surface of the cooled baked dough with rosewater white icing, leaving an edge of about 2.5 mm/⅛ inch around the pastry without glaze. Cut straight across into four 3 x 20 cm/1½ x 7¾ inch strips.

DANISHES FILLED WITH VANILLA CUSTARD AND RASPBERRY JAM

Wieneråttor (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Rising time: 30 minutes
Makes: 20 pastries

1 quantity Danish pastry (page 372)
1 quantity Vanilla Custard (pages 532–3)
200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons)
raspberry jam (pages 510–11), the jam
needs to be firm for this recipe
1 quantity of White Icing (page 530),
optional

Roll the dough out into a rectangle 30 cm/12 inch long and about 1 cm/½ inch in thickness. Cut the rectangle across into ribbons 1.5 cm/¾ inch wide.

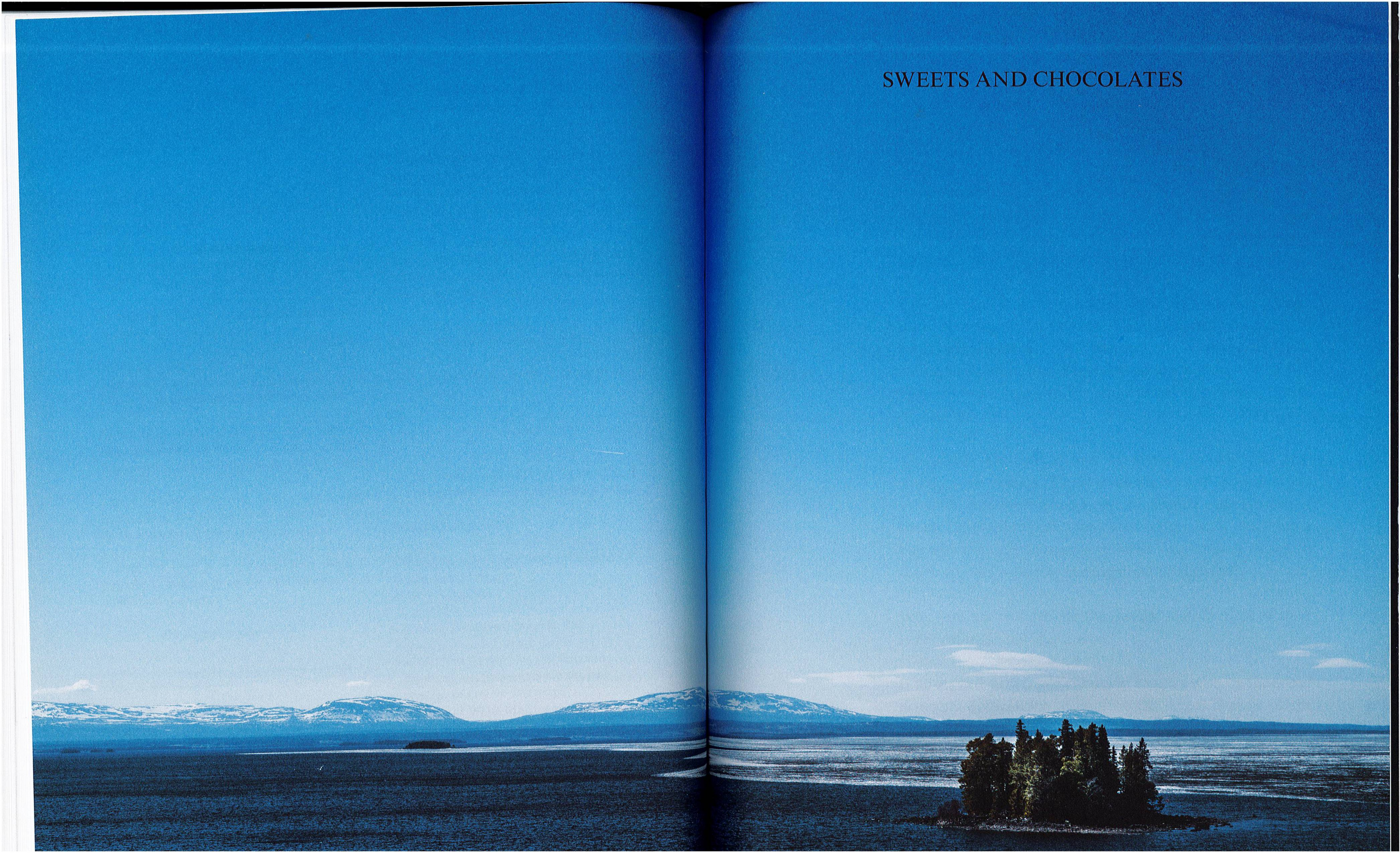
Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper. Pick a ribbon up and twist it into a spiral before placing it on the prepared baking sheet like a figure eight. Both ends should join underneath the middle of the finished eight shape. Cover with a clean dish towel and leave to rise for 30 minutes, or until almost doubled in size.

Once the pastries have risen, put a spoonful of jam on one side of each pastry and one of vanilla custard on the other.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 8. Bake for about 12 minutes, or until golden. Leave to cool on the baking sheets. Once cool, decorate with icing, if you want to.

For image see page 377

SWEETS AND CHOCOLATES



Previous page: Lake Storsjön, Sweden, end of winter 2018.

Pages 386–7: Christmas fair, Jamtli, Sweden 2017.

In many parts of the Nordics, but perhaps most notably in Scandinavia with an epicentre in Sweden we have a very sweet tooth. Even if most of the sweets we eat are processed industrial crap we do have a bunch of recipes we actually make at home, especially around Christmas. This chapter is mostly about those, however no book touching on Nordic food culture would be complete without describing the Swedish contemporary tradition (or perhaps rather compulsory behaviour) of Saturday sweets (candy).

I vividly remember how special Saturdays felt when I was a kid growing up in Sweden. The excitement of going to bed Friday night, knowing that tomorrow, after breakfast, riding shotgun in the Volvo 245 station wagon, which was blue, we were going to the shop to get that week's ration of sweets.

The smells, the colours and the feeling of unlimited possibility were heaven. Faced with the wall of plastic boxes in which you were (under strict parental supervision of course) allowed to pick a few sweets into a little white paper bag with multi-sized pastel-coloured, overlapping circles on the front, this was truly the highlight of the week.

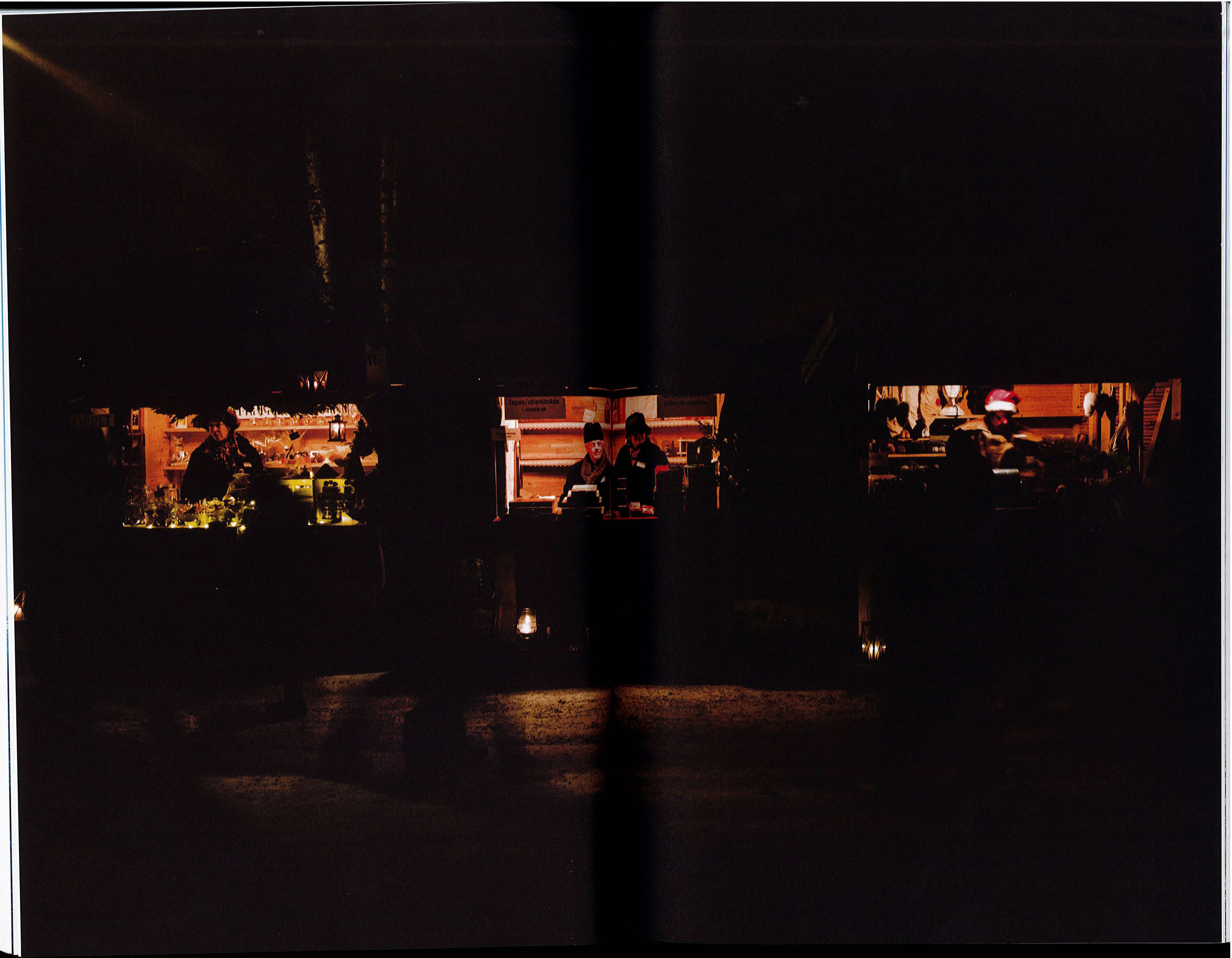
Why, you ask yourself, do the Swedes restrict most of their sweet eating to one day a week?

It all started with a mid-twentieth century wish by the social democrat government to improve the dental hygiene of the country's citizens. Many different reforms were put in place, among them a generous public dental-care system, compulsory fluoride rinsing at schools and other sensible stuff like that.

However, in addition to more balanced proceedings like making people brush their teeth, from 1945–1955 one of the most scandalous and abusive medical experiments on humans ever to take place in a Western democracy was carried out on the south Swedish Vipeholm institution for the mentally ill. To study the actions of tooth decay a group of at least 1000 people was needed, preferably in a controlled environment for an extended period of time. These requirements were met by mental institutions of the time, where patients were often locked up for life.

The ill were fed large amounts of particularly sticky toffee over extended periods of time to encourage the formation of cavities and to study the long-term effects of carbohydrates on dental hygiene. Of course at the price of terrible pain and loss of quality of life for those participating without consent.

It was soon concluded that carbs weren't good for your teeth and that if you concentrated the intake of, for example, sweets to once a week, it would probably be better for you. The information was rolled out to the eager citizens of my home country, who listened to the injunctions of their beloved government and started eating sweets mostly on Saturdays. This has led us to present times where most of us do have really good teeth, probably not because of the sweet Saturday though, as we also eat the most candy per person and year in the whole world, a good 18 kg/40 lb on average.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CHOCOLATE OATMEAL BALLS

Havregrynskugler (Denmark)
Chokladbollar (Sweden)

I must have made these *chokladbollar* a thousand times when growing up, as I am sure many Swedes and other Nordics have.

Some people like their chocolate balls rolled in pearl sugar; myself, I prefer coconut flakes. Some recipes contain strong coffee, which I think is silly, since it makes the texture much less fantastic. The extra water content melts the sugar so that you lose that little crunchy feeling and it makes the rolled oats swell and lose their texture. If you want the coffee flavour, then add a tablespoon of instant coffee powder to this recipe; it works much better.

Preparation time: 15 minutes
Makes: 20 balls

200 g/7¼ oz (1¾ sticks) butter, at room temperature
175 g/6 oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
2 tablespoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
6 tablespoons cocoa powder
pinch of salt
210 g/7¼ oz (1⅔ cups) rolled oats
pearl sugar or desiccated coconut, to coat

Combine the butter, sugar, vanilla sugar, cocoa powder and salt in a large bowl and work with your hands until well combined. Add the oats and continue working until they are just combined.

Prepare a plate with a generous layer of your choice of coating.

Divide the chocolate mixture into 20 equal pieces and roll into balls with your hands. Let them drop directly into your desired coating and roll them around to coat evenly.

Wash your hands so they are clean. This way you will not get smudgy brown pearl sugar on the coconut flakes as you transfer the finished chocolate balls to a serving plate.

For image see page opposite

CHOCOLATE COOKIE CRUMB BALLS FLAVOURED WITH ARRACK

Arraksbollar (Sweden)

These are similar to the Chocolate Oatmeal Balls, left, but they are flavoured with *arrack* and coated with chocolate sprinkles, instead of sugar or desiccated coconut.

Preparation time: 20 minutes
Makes: 20 balls

100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
85 g/3 oz (¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
3 tablespoons cocoa powder
arrack, to taste
300 g/11 oz (2½ cups) cookie crumbs
chocolate sprinkles, to coat

Combine the butter, sugar, vanilla sugar, cocoa powder and *arrack* in a large bowl and work with your hands until well combined. Add the cookie crumbs and continue working until just combined.

Prepare a plate with a generous layer of chocolate sprinkles.

Divide the chocolate mixture into 20 equal pieces and roll into balls with your hands. Let the balls drop directly into the sprinkles. Roll them around to coat evenly, then transfer to a serving plate.

Top to bottom: Leila's Rocky Road (page 391); Peppermint and Chocolate Pastilles (page 394); Chocolate Cookie Crumb Rolls Flavoured with Punsch (page 390); Chocolate Oatmeal Balls (page 388)

CHOCOLATE COOKIE CRUMB BALLS FLAVOURED WITH RUM

Romkugler (Denmark)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 15 balls

400 g/14 oz leftover dry sponge cake, muffins or cookies
4 tablespoons marmalade or jam, such as raspberry jam (pages 510–11)
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
3 tablespoons cocoa powder
2 tablespoons rum
100 g/3½ oz dark (semisweet) chocolate, melted
1 tablespoon cream
sprinkles or desiccated coconut, to coat

Place the cake or cookies in a food processor and process until crumbly. Add the marmalade, vanilla sugar, cocoa powder, rum, chocolate and cream to the cookie crumb mix and process until combined.

Prepare a plate with a generous layer of your choice of coating. Divide the chocolate mixture into 15 equal pieces and roll into balls with your hands. Let them drop directly into your desired coating and roll them around to coat evenly.

CHOCOLATE COOKIE CRUMB ROLLS FLAVOURED WITH PUNSCH

Dammsugare (Sweden)

Introduced during the first half of the twentieth century, these classic Swedish sweets were probably a way for cafes and pastry shops to make use of broken or otherwise unsellable cookies and cakes. They are absolutely delicious.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 20 rolls

400 g/14 oz cookie crumbs, dry cake or other bits of leftover sweet pastry
150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
4 tablespoons cocoa powder
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) *punsch* or *arrack*

To decorate
500 g/1 lb 2 oz green marzipan
potato starch, for dusting
200 g/7 oz dark (semisweet) chocolate

Place the cookie crumbs, dry cake or sweet pastry in a food processor. Add the rest of the ingredients and process until you get a thick mixture. Taste it to make sure you don't need to add any more *punsch* or *arrack*. It should be quite boozy. Place the mixture on the work counter and shape it into 2 long logs, 2 cm/¾ inch in diameter. Put them in the refrigerator while you prepare the marzipan.

Line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper. Dust the work counter with some potato starch and then roll out the marzipan to a rectangular shape, about 2 mm/1⁄16 inch thick. Divide it in half and then roll up the cookie-crumb logs in the marzipan, before cutting them each into into ten 4-cm/1½-inch pieces.

Melt the chocolate by following the instructions on page 82 and dip both ends of the rolls into the chocolate. Place them on the prepared baking sheet or a tray and then put them in the refrigerator to cool and for the chocolate to harden.

For image see page 389

FINNISH POTATO CHOCOLATE BALLS

Perunaleivos (Finland)
Potatisbakelse (Sweden)

This is another one of those recipes that uses leftover dry cake or shortbread. The name is deceptive, as most recipes do not contain any potato at all, it's simply the shape and look of it – a potato-shaped lump of the batter with indentations (like the potato's eyes) is coated in cocoa powder and dusted with a little icing (confectioners') sugar. The result will look similar to a potato freshly dug up from the soil.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 20 balls

1 quantity Chocolate Cookie Crumb Balls batter flavoured with Arrack (page 388) in which you substitute *arrack* with rum
2 tablespoons cocoa powder, to coat
1 tablespoon icing (confectioners') sugar, for dusting

Divide the chocolate mixture into 20 equal portions and shape into potato-shaped lumps with your hands. Make small indentations to symbolize the eyes of the potato using a pointed object such as a chopstick.

Spread the cocoa powder out on a plate. Coat the potatoes by rolling them in the cocoa powder, then place each potato in a paper bun case and finish by dusting each one with icing (confectioners') sugar.

LEILA'S ROCKY ROAD

Leila's Rocky Road (Sweden)

This is one of those recipes that some might feel does not belong in a book of Nordic baking. After all, Rocky Road was invented in Australia in 1853 to peddle spoiled sweets (candies) imported from Europe and was later popularized as an ice cream flavour in the US. However, if you were to visit 100 random Swedish families on Christmas Eve I believe you would find that an almost shockingly high number of them would be serving homemade Rocky Road alongside more traditional sweets, like *knäck* (page 392) after dinner. My sister (and thereby myself by association) can't imagine our Christmas dinner without chunks of this outrageously sweet amazingness to finish things off.

I have not yet been able to find out when the first Rocky Road was produced in Sweden, but that's on the other hand entirely irrelevant. What's important is when it was popularized on a broad front, when it went from a slightly vulgar American ice cream flavour to the delicious sweet treat.

This, and many other things that have become a natural part of my home country's sugary repertoire, was introduced to us by baker/chef Leila Lindholm through her various television shows. The Rocky Road was first mentioned in 2007 and the rest is history.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: plenty

600 g/1 lb 5 oz dark (semisweet) chocolate
260 g/9¼ oz Dumle toffees
280 g/10 oz (2½ cups) salted peanuts
120 g/4 oz (1 cup) shelled pistachios
4 handfuls mini marshmallows

Line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper. Melt the chocolate by following the instructions on page 82. Cut the toffees into 3 pieces each, then add them and almost all of the nuts and marshmallows to the melted chocolate. Pour the chocolate mixture onto the prepared baking sheet and spread it out until it is 3 cm/1¼ inch in thickness. Sprinkle the remaining nuts and marshmallows on top and leave to cool and set. Cut into pieces or break into chunks.

For image see page 389

SWEDISH CHRISTMAS TOFFEE

Knäck (Sweden)

Knäck is the Swedish word for 'break', and I assume that it refers to the texture of the finished sweet. Personally I like my *knäck* a bit chewy and so I cook it for a slightly shorter time. *Knäck* is always poured hot into small paper moulds and left to set in them. For those people preferring a very sticky texture, the paper won't let go of the toffee when cool so they will have to put the whole thing into their mouth, paper and all, to release the sweet from its packaging.

Most recipes for *knäck* include a couple of tablespoons of chopped almonds, while others include breadcrumbs – and some recipes include both. While I have never understood the breadcrumbs, I do like the almonds. *Knäck* is considered essential during the Christmas weeks by most Swedish families.

It is easy to make this toffee if you have a good sugar thermometer, but perfectly possible without. 122°C/252°F makes a soft but not sticky toffee, a temperature below this will give sticky toffee; 125°C/257°F makes a firm toffee, and temperatures above will produce a hard result.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour, plus setting time
Makes: 45–60 pieces, depending on how long you boil it and how big the paper cups are

- 200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) cream
- 170 g/6 oz (¾ cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
- 280 g/10 oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons) golden syrup
- 2 tablespoons salted butter
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped almonds and/or breadcrumbs (optional)

Mix all of the ingredients, except for the almonds and/or breadcrumbs, in a heavy pan. I like to use a cast-iron frying pan or skillet for this. Bring to a simmer over a medium heat, stirring with a wooden spoon from time to time. Continue cooking until the desired temperature – indicating the temperature your *knäck* will have – is reached. It will take 30–40 minutes.

If you don't have a sugar thermometer you can test the consistency of the *knäck* mix – and thereby judge if it is done cooking – by spooning a drop of it into a cup of cold water. After a few seconds, when the toffee has cooled, you will be able to judge the final texture.

As soon as it is ready, add the almonds and/or breadcrumbs to the caramel and spoon it into the moulds to set.

STRIPED PEPPERMINT STICKS

Polkagrisar (Sweden)

Polkagrisar are Swedish candy sticks flavoured with quite a bit of peppermint oil. These red-and-white canes are claimed to have been invented by Amalia Eriksson, a Swedish woman, in 1859. However, red-and-white canes were made in other parts of Europe during the same period of time, and all-white ones flavoured with peppermint had been produced much earlier, so talking about her inventing them is perhaps a bit of an exaggeration. Where her inspiration came from is not documented, but she was surely the first person to make these particular sweets (candies) in her home town of Gränna, which is now very famous for them and receives in excess of one million visitors a year, who go there mostly to see the many sweet (candy) shops and buy themselves a few *polkagrisar*.

To make this recipe it is essential to have a work counter made from marble or some other heavy stone. This, to first cool the melted sugar and then to keep it from cooling too much so that it becomes hard before you are done working it.

As always, when handling boiling sugar syrup, it's important to work very carefully and to wear long gloves to avoid burns.

1 kg/2¼ lb is quite a bit of candy but it is very difficult to make less as the sugar will cool down too quickly as you handle it if the amount is any smaller. They keep well though, so make the full recipe, eat what you want and give the rest away to some friends.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 1 kg/2¼ lb

- neutral oil, for the work counter
- 1 kg/2¼ lb (5 cups) sugar
- 1 tablespoon *Ättika* (12%) vinegar (page 540)
- 25 drops peppermint oil
- red food colouring

Lightly oil your marble work counter, a couple of stainless steel spatulas and a baking sheet.

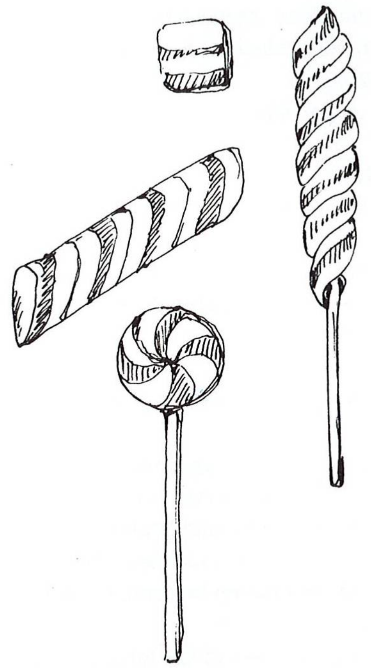
Put the sugar into a heavy-bottomed pot and pour in 400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) water. Bring to the boil, then continue boiling until the mixture reaches the 'hard crack' stage on a sugar thermometer (150°C/300°F). If you don't have a thermometer, you can test the consistency by spooning a drop of it into a cup of cold water. After a few seconds, when it has cooled, you will be able to judge the final texture. At the hard crack stage it should form brittle threads that snap easily.

Taking care not to get hot sugar onto your skin, carefully pour the hot syrup directly onto the work counter, keeping about 100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) back in the pan. Add some red food colouring to this smaller amount and keep it warm over a very low heat while you work the remaining sugar.

Add the drops of peppermint oil to the mass of hot sugar on your counter. Use the oiled spatulas to fold the edges into the centre. Repeat this folding and, as soon as it has cooled enough to touch, use your hands to work it. Start stretching the candy out into lengths, and then folding it back over on itself to incorporate air. As you work it, it will start to stiffen and turn white. At this point, roll it out to a long rope, about 4 cm/1½ inches in diameter. Set aside.

Scrape the red-tinted syrup onto the work counter and work it in the same way until it stiffens a little. Roll it out to the same length as the uncoloured white piece, although the red piece will be much thinner.

Press the red piece on top of the white piece and pull the whole thing out to a long, even rope, about 80 cm/31½ inches in length. Twist the rope slightly, and fold it in half on top of itself. Stretch it out again, then roll it on the work counter until it is as thin as you want it to be. Use oiled scissors to cut it into sticks or snip into small lozenges (see illustrations below). Transfer to the oiled baking sheet to cool and harden. Store them in an airtight container, as they will go sticky if allowed to get moist.



PEPPERMINT AND CHOCOLATE PASTILLES

Mintkyssar (Sweden)

These little pastilles are often made for Christmas and served with coffee after the actual meal.

Preparation time: 15 minutes
Drying time: minimum 4 hours, preferably overnight
Makes: 40 pastilles

1 egg white
220 g/7¾ oz (1 cup) icing (confectioners') sugar
peppermint oil, to taste
50 g/2 oz very good quality dark (semisweet) chocolate

Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

In a bowl, whisk the egg white to soft peaks. Sift in the icing (confectioners') sugar and add peppermint oil to taste. Stir until thoroughly combined. Spoon the mixture into a disposable piping (pastry) bag and cut the tip to a suitable size.

Pipe 40 neat flat discs of the mixture onto the prepared baking sheets. Leave them at room temperature to dry. It will take at least 4 hours, but it's best to leave them overnight.

Melt the chocolate by following the intructions on page 82. Once the chocolate has melted, transfer it to a disposable piping (pastry) bag and pipe a generous dot of chocolate on top of each pastille. Leave the chocolate to set before serving.

For image see page 389

AMMONIUM CHLORIDE LIQUORICE

Ammonium chloride liquorice, or salty liquorice, is a type of sweet (candy) common in the Nordic region, Holland and Germany. It is particularly popular in Finland where it is called *salmiakki* and in Sweden where it is called *salmiak*. The name *salmiak* comes from the old Latin name for ammonium chloride – *sal ammoniacus* – which has also given the name to ammonia and ammonium. It is not known how long liquorice has been flavoured with ammonium chloride but it has been produced industrially at least since the 1930s. It is also a key ingredient in *salmiakkikossu* (Finnish salty liquorice vodka). These types of sweets are said to be an acquired taste and many people who are not accustomed to the flavour from when they were kids never seem to learn to like it much.

SOFT CAKES

Previous page: Dunes, Skåne, Sweden, May 2018

The summer heat was humid and the air stood still, permeated by the scent of just-mown grass and the warm engine of a lawnmower parked close by. It was quiet in that summer way, which isn't quiet at all, but rather a blanket of white noise coming from nature anxiously living life at double speed before summer ends and the winter comes back again.

We were seated in the rickety group of blue garden furniture in front of Tove's family's red painted cottage outside Sundsvall. It was the kids and us, Tove's mum and her grandmother and it was time for *fika* (pages 44–9). The table was set, coffee from the percolator, cordial for the kids. Many kinds of cookies and biscuits on little trays, and in the middle of the table a lidded metal box with a worn print of a bouquet of flowers on the top. A box, the contents of which I already knew because it was always the same. A box that held great promise of imminent amazingness. The lid was opened and a knife sank into the cake hiding inside, carving pieces of soft and crumbly sponge. The transformation by removing piece after piece from an untouched round always amuses me, the first piece missing turns the round into a Pac-man shape, and with each new piece missing its mouth opens wider, until finally only a single piece remains. My piece. I bite into it and a perfect summer day is complete.

Soft cakes make up a very significant part of Nordic baking culture, both because they are often served with coffee as a snack but also because they make up the base for most layer cakes, indispensable at celebrations like birthdays.

In the Nordics our standard wheat flour is quite weak (soft), meaning it's low in gluten. This is good to produce the crumbly and short, spongy texture that you want from a cake. If you live in a part of the world where standard flour is a bit higher in gluten then cake flour can be used to solve that problem. Cake flour is most likely the best type of flour for the recipes in this chapter. However, you can bake cakes with any wheat flour, also very strong and gluten-rich ones. The thing is that the more potential to develop gluten a flour has, the better you have to execute the recipe for it not to become a problem. So if it says in a recipe that you should, for example, mix something 'until just combined' it's important to not mix any longer than 'until just combined' as each second of working the now-hydrated wheat flour will produce some more gluten and make the finished cake a little bit more stretchy and a little bit less short in texture.

Read the text on wheat (pages 26–8) for some more information on how this works.

NORDIC SPONGE CAKES

We love sponge cakes in the Nordic region; they are baked and eaten in several different ways and are used in many of the traditional layer cakes (pages 436–75).

There is a great deal of cultural cake crossover between the various Nordic countries and the ingredients and flavourings of the most popular sponge cakes are almost identical. However, there are some regional differences. In Sweden, for example, the most widely made sponge is called *sockerkaka* (see left), which literally means 'sugar cake', while in Denmark it is called *sandkage*, 'sand cake' (see page 406) and the main difference is in the method. In the Swedish cake the butter is melted with milk and added to whisked eggs and sugar; the dry ingredients are then sifted into the wet ingredients. In the Danish version, butter and sugar are creamed together, and the eggs are incorporated before adding the dry ingredients. This method keeps the butter emulsified all through the preparation of the batter. In general terms, the Danish way gives a slightly shorter, crumblier cake whereas the Swedish one gives a firmer, spongier result. Anyhow, I am probably splitting hairs here. A cake is a cake, and most people can't tell one from another one except by their level of deliciousness – which has nothing to do with the technicalities described above.

You can flavour your sponge with 2 teaspoons of Vanilla Sugar (page 536), the grated zest of a lemon or anything else you feel is appropriate. If using a dry flavouring, it is best to add it with the flour and baking powder. If it is wet enough to stick to your sifter, just add it to the batter at the very end.

The recipes below are suitable for a 24-cm/9½-inch round cake pan or a regular 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan.

If you are making a layer cake with any of the following sponge recipes, then leave it to cool down in the pan, rather than on a wire rack. This makes the crust softer, and it will be easier to slice horizontally into layers. With the Danish sponge cake, it's important to invert the pan onto the wire rack, so the butter content can even out within the cake. Leave the pan over it as a little cover.

BASIC SPONGE CAKE

Sukkerkake (Norway)
Sokerikakku (Finland)
Sukkerkage (Denmark)
Sockerkaka (Sweden)

Almost all books on traditional Nordic cooking and baking have at least three recipes for this type of cake or some similar cakes, and at least one for a special, light-and-airy version that is meant to be extra-suitable for layer cakes. The recipe here is the one I like the most. When I was growing up this would have been labelled as 'fine' or 'moist' sponge cake. I never understood why there should be a need for a sponge cake that wasn't 'fine' or 'moist'...

If you want a lemony cake, measure out the juice and use it to replace the same amount of milk. But only add the lemon juice after the dry ingredients have already been incorporated into the batter.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 8 pieces

250 g/9 oz (2¼ sticks) butter, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) milk
4 eggs
350 g/12 oz (1¾ cups) sugar
320 g/11¼ oz (2⅔ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 teaspoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536) and/or zest of 1 lemon (optional)

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Combine the butter and milk in a small pan and heat until the butter has melted. Leave to cool down to room temperature.

Whisk the eggs with the sugar in a bowl until light and fluffy. Add the butter and milk mixture and mix in thoroughly. Sift the dry ingredients into the bowl, adding the dry flavourings, if using, and whisk in gently. Add lemon zest or juice last.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan, smooth the surface and bake for about 40 minutes, or until cooked through. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

If you like crisp edges, then unmould the cake onto a wire rack and leave it to cool completely. For soft edges, leave the cake in the pan to cool.

For image see page 425

BASIC SPONGE CAKE, SLIGHTLY RICHER VARIATION

Saftig sockerkaka (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Makes: 8 pieces

200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
220 g/7¾ oz (1 cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
3 eggs
240 g/8½ oz (2 cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
2 teaspoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536)

Preheat the oven to 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Combine the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat at medium speed until pale and fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time, making sure each is fully incorporated before you add the next. Sift the dry ingredients together into the bowl and mix gently until just combined.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan, smooth the surface and bake for 50–55 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

RICE FLOUR SPONGE CAKE

Rismjölskaka (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Makes: 8 pieces

250 g/9 oz (2¼ sticks) butter, at room temperature, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
220 g/7¾ oz (1 cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
3 eggs, separated
10 bitter almonds, grated
180 g/6½ oz (1¼ cups plus 1 tablespoon) rice flour
75 g/2¾ oz (½ cup plus 2 tablespoons) weak (soft) wheat flour

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Place the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat at medium speed until pale and fluffy. Add the egg yolks, one at a time, making sure each is fully incorporated before you add the next. Sift the dry ingredients, including the bitter almonds, together into the bowl and mix gently until just combined.

Whisk the egg whites in another bowl until they are really fluffy, then add them to the batter and fold in. Be careful not to stir too much.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan, smooth the surface and bake for 45 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

For image see page 419

DANISH SPONGE CAKE

Sandkage (Denmark)

It is easier to keep the butter emulsified through the whole process if the butter and eggs are at roughly the same temperature, so take them both out of the refrigerator at the same time. This batter is dry enough to take the juice of a whole lemon if you want, however to make a really lemony cake you may want to add even more lemon juice, in which case you might have to increase the cooking time a bit.

Some older recipes state that you place this cake in a cold oven that is set to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. This was probably perfect in the early days of electric ovens, but today they heat up quickly and I think this technique produces too dark a colour. I have described my method below, but if you want to try the old-fashioned way – or if you have a really old oven – then proceed as described above.

Preparation and cooking time: 1¼ hours
(or a bit longer if you bake it in
a loaf pan)
Makes: 8 pieces

350 g/12 oz (3 sticks) butter, at room
temperature, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
350 g/12 oz (1¾ cups) sugar
5 eggs
350 g/12 oz (3 cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
2 teaspoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536) and/or
zest of 1 lemon (optional)

Preheat the oven to 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan or a 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Combine the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat at medium speed until pale and fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time, making sure each is fully incorporated before you add the next. Sift the dry ingredients into the bowl and mix in gently until just combined. The batter should be quite stiff.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan or loaf pan and smooth the surface. Bake for about 1 hour, or until cooked through. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 66–9.

Leave the cake in the pan for 10 minutes before inverting it onto a wire rack. Leave to cool upside down on the wire rack so that the butter doesn't all end up in the bottom part of the cake.

FILLED SPONGE CAKE

Danakaka (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 8 pieces

butter, to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
3 eggs
270 g/9½ oz (1⅓ cups) sugar
180 g/6½ oz (1½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
2 tablespoons icing (confectioners') sugar,
to decorate

For the filling
200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter
1 tablespoon sugar
150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) milk
3 tablespoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
2 egg yolks

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Place the eggs and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat at medium speed until pale and fluffy. Add 100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) just-boiled water and then sift in all of the dry ingredients and stir until just combined.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan, smooth the surface and bake for about 35 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70. Leave the cake to cool.

Make the filling by bringing the butter, sugar and milk to the boil in a small pan over a medium-high heat. Boil for 5 minutes, then remove from the heat and leave to cool for a few minutes. Add the rest of the ingredients while stirring.

Slice the cooled cake into 2 horizontal layers with a long serrated knife. Spoon the filling on the bottom layer and place the other layer on top. Sift the icing (confectioners') sugar on top of the cake before serving.

POTATO STARCH SPONGE CAKE / SAND CAKE

Sandkaka (Sweden)

This is a cake for the real connoisseur of sponge cakes. At first it can come off as a bit dry and a bit boring, qualities easily overlooked, especially alongside richer, lusher and more ingratiating pastries like, let's say, a carrot cake with cream cheese frosting or something else of a similar level of delicious vulgarity. But *sandkaka* truly is the most elegant of all the sponge cakes in the world. It doesn't flatter you with excess fat and sugar but slowly lures you into a state where you cannot stop eating it because of the especially fragile texture provided by the potato starch and the perfectly balanced sweetness, on occasion punctuated by a whiff of Cognac.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Standing time: overnight
Makes: 8 pieces

200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, at room
temperature, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
200 g/7 oz (1 cup plus 1 tablespoon)
potato starch
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
3 eggs
225 g/8 oz (1 cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
3 tablespoons Cognac

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Combine the butter with the potato starch, baking powder and vanilla sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat at medium speed until light in colour.

In a separate bowl whisk the eggs with the sugar until light and fluffy, then add the Cognac. Add the eggs to the butter mixture, little by little, with the motor at low speed.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan and smooth the surface. Bake for about 40 minutes, or until cooked through. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

Turn the cake out of the pan and leave to cool on a wire rack. Put the pan back on the cake as a kind of lid and leave it to stand overnight before cutting into it.

POTATO AND ALMOND CAKE/ 'THE CROWNS' CAKE

Kronans kaka (Sweden)

This dense, flourless cake is baked with cold, cooked potatoes and almonds and has a name which implies that it has its origins within the Swedish army, which historically, as in all monarchies, belonged to the king. I haven't been able to figure out if this is true, but the first recipe for it was published in a cookery book called *Hemmets Kokbok* in 1903. Many recipes state that it should be served with a lemon sauce. I don't know if this is the original way but I prefer it just as it is, alongside a cup of coffee in the afternoon.

The original recipe calls for 100 g/3½ oz (⅔ cup) whole almonds to be finely ground, but in this version I substitute ground almonds instead. Flavour with a couple of finely grated bitter almonds or some bitter almond oil for a more pronounced almond flavour if you prefer that.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 8 pieces

2 floury potatoes
75 g/2¾ oz (5 tablespoons) butter at room temperature, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
125 g/4½ oz (½ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
2 eggs
2 bitter almonds, very finely grated (or use a drop of bitter almond oil)
110 g/3¾ oz (1 cup plus 2 tablespoons) ground almonds

Boil the potatoes until just tender. Drain and allow them to cool, then peel them and grate on the coarse side of a box grater.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 23 x 13 x 8 cm/9 x 5 x 3 inch loaf pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Combine the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat at medium speed until pale and fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time, making sure each is fully incorporated before you add the next. Add the flavouring, followed by the grated potatoes and the ground almonds.

Scrape the batter into the prepared loaf pan and smooth the surface. Bake for about 40 minutes, or until golden and cooked through. It should be quite dense. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

Leave to cool, then either turn out or serve it straight from the pan.

ALMOND SPONGE CAKE

Mandelkage (Denmark)
Mandelkaka (Sweden)

This is a recipe for a very delicious, very dense and very fantastic almond sponge cake. I usually just refer to it as, 'the cake'. Eat a slice with your afternoon coffee or at any other time of the day.

I like to have quite a bit of acidity in it as it easily becomes too sweet. Sometimes I use lemon and sometimes I use *Ättika* (12%) vinegar (page 540). I usually don't add zest to this as I prefer the taste of almond without it but feel free to add some if you like.

And yes, I know, the recipe looks a bit insane but it should really be like this, it will almost fill the loaf pan but it won't rise as much as ordinary cake.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Makes: 8 pieces

200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, soft, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
170 g/6 oz (¾ cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
200 g/7 oz Almond Paste (page 531), grated on the coarse side of a box grater
2 tablespoons *Ättika* (12%) vinegar (page 540) or lemon juice
5 eggs
130 g/4½ oz (1 cup plus 1 tablespoon) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
good pinch of salt

Preheat the oven to 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2. Butter a 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Place the butter, sugar, almond paste and vinegar or lemon juice in the bowl of a stand mixer. Mix until smooth and a little lighter in colour – the mix should be really stiff. Add the eggs, one at a time, making sure each is fully incorporated before you add the next. Sift the flour, baking powder and salt into the bowl. Work a bit more in the stand mixer. The flour should be mixed in well and the batter should be smooth, but do not overwork it.

Scrape the batter into the prepared loaf pan, smooth the surface and bake for 1 hour. When it is done (see pages 69–70), place the cake upside down onto a wire rack to cool. This is a very important step. By inverting the cake the fat from the butter and almonds will be given the possibility to spread evenly in it. If you leave it as it was baked to cool it will be very greasy at the bottom and too dry at the top. After a few minutes remove the pan and let the cake cool to room temperature still upside down, before cutting into it.

OLD-FASHIONED DANISH SPONGE CAKE

Sodakage (Denmark)

All the Danes I have asked for a recipe for this classic Danish sponge seem to make it with baking powder, however, the name indicates that it should rather contain bicarbonate of soda (baking soda). Especially since baking powder was invented in 1843 in England and this cake is older than that. I have found and included one recipe with bicarbonate of soda from a historical source and also a version with baking powder, which corresponds more to how people bake it today. The historical recipe (which I have slightly modified to function in a modern kitchen) was flavoured with candied citrus peel while most of the modern ones use lemon zest. This cake is not just tasty but also a very interesting example of how a dish can change with the circumstances around it changing. Before baking powder, if something wasn't leavened with yeast, most likely it was leavened with bicarbonate of soda. Today, most cakes are leavened with baking powder as it gives a better result, while many dry cookies are still leavened with bicarbonate of soda as it produces a more desirable texture in some recipes. Historically candied peel was both fancy and the only way for most to season something with citrus, but today it's both easier and cheaper to grate the zest from a fresh lemon.

HISTORICAL RECIPE (VERSION 1)

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Makes: 2 loaves

250 g/9 oz (2¼ sticks) butter, at room temperature, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (4 cups plus 2 tablespoons) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)
250 g/9 oz (1¼ cups) sugar
3 eggs
450 ml/15 fl oz (1⅔ cups plus 2 tablespoons) milk
70 g/2¾ oz candied citrus peel

Preheat the oven to 155°C/311°F/Gas Mark 2. Butter two 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pans and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Place the butter, flour, bicarbonate of soda (baking soda) and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and work until it is fully combined but crumbly. Whisk the eggs in a bowl and add to the batter with the milk and candied peel and work until just combined.

Pour the batter into the prepared pans, smooth the surface and bake for about 1 hour. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

CONTEMPORARY RECIPE (VERSION 2)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 1 loaf

50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
125 g/4½ oz (½ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
2 eggs, at room temperature
250 g/9 oz (2 cups plus 1 tablespoon) weak (soft) wheat flour
3 teaspoons baking powder
150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) milk
zest of 1 lemon

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Butter a 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Place the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat at medium speed until the mixture lightens in colour. Add the eggs one by one, making sure each is fully incorporated before you add the next. Sift the flour and baking powder together into the bowl, then add the lemon zest and milk and mix until it is just combined.

Scrape the batter into the prepared loaf pan, smooth the surface and bake for about 45 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

TIGER CAKE / MARBLE CAKE

Tigerkake (Norway)
Tiikerikakku (Finland)
Marmorkage (Denmark)
Tigerkaka (Sweden)

Almost all over the Nordic region, a plain sponge cake marbled with chocolate sponge is referred to as a 'tiger' cake.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 1 loaf

250 g/9 oz (2¼ sticks) butter, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) milk
4 eggs
350 g/12 oz (1¾ cups) sugar
320 g/11¼ oz (2⅔ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 tablespoons cocoa powder

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Combine the butter and milk in a small pan and heat until the butter has melted. Leave to cool to room temperature.

Whisk the eggs with the sugar in a bowl until light and fluffy. Add the butter and milk mixture and mix in thoroughly. Sift the dry ingredients into the bowl and whisk in gently.

Scrape half of the batter into the prepared loaf pan. Sift the cocoa powder into the remaining batter and mix it in thoroughly. Scrape this chocolate batter into the loaf pan, then use the handle of a wooden spoon to swirl the two batters together.

Bake for about 40 minutes, or until cooked through. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

If you like crisp edges, then unmould the cake onto a wire rack and leave it to cool completely. If you prefer soft edges, leave the cake in the pan to cool. Remove from the pan and serve.

For image see page 413

SPONGE CAKE GLAZED WITH ALMONDS AND CARAMEL / TOSCA CAKE

Toscakakku (Finland)
Toscakaka (Sweden)

This is a Swedish *fika* (coffee break, pages 44–9) favourite that uses a slightly denser sponge cake recipe than the basic recipe on page 404. The quantities below are just enough to bake the cake (which shouldn't be too high) in a 24-cm/9½-inch round cake pan.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 8 pieces

100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
75 ml/2½ fl oz (⅓ cup) milk
2 eggs
150 g/5 oz (¾ cup) sugar
125 g/4½ oz (1 cup) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder

For the glaze
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter
85 g/3 oz (¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
2 tablespoons weak (soft) wheat flour
2 tablespoons milk
100 g/3½ oz (1 cup) flaked almonds

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch springform cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see page 66–9.

Combine the butter and milk in a small pan and heat until the butter has melted. Leave to cool to room temperature.

Whisk the eggs with the sugar in a large bowl until light and fluffy. Add the cooled butter and milk mixture and mix in thoroughly. Sift the dry ingredients into the bowl and mix in gently.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan, smooth the surface and bake for about 20 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

While the cake is baking, prepare the glaze. Combine all the ingredients in a pan and heat gently over low heat until the mixture simmers and thickens a bit. It doesn't take long, a few minutes should be enough. Pour the glaze over the cake without really taking it out of the oven, rather just open the door and pour it onto the cake before letting the cake finish baking for another 15–20 minutes. There is no need to spread the glaze as that will happen automatically in the oven. When ready it should be deeply golden.

Leave the cake to cool in the pan, then turn it out of the pan before serving.

For image see page 413

GLAZED ORANGE SPONGE CAKE WITH CANDIED ORANGE PEEL / AMBROSIA CAKE

Ambrosiakaka (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 8 pieces

250 g/9 oz (2¼ sticks) butter, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) milk
4 eggs
350 g/12 oz (1¾ cups) sugar
320 g/11¼ oz (2⅔ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
grated zest and juice of 1 orange
50 g/2 oz (⅓ cup) candied orange peel, finely diced
chopped pistachios, to sprinkle (optional)

For the icing
240 g/8½ oz (2 cups) icing (confectioners') sugar
2 tablespoons fresh orange juice, possibly a little more

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Combine the butter and milk in a small pan and heat until the butter has melted. Leave to cool to room temperature.

Whisk the eggs with the sugar until light and fluffy. Add the butter and milk mixture and mix in thoroughly. Sift the dry ingredients into the bowl and mix until fully incorporated but no longer. Mix the orange zest and juice into the batter.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan and smooth the surface. Bake for about 40 minutes, or until cooked through. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70. If you like crisp edges, then unmould the cake onto a wire rack and leave it to cool completely. For soft edges, leave the cake in the pan to cool.

Mix the icing (confectioners') sugar with the fresh orange juice in a bowl and spread onto the cold cake. Before the icing sets, sprinkle on the diced candied orange peel and pistachios, if using.

For image see page opposite

SAFFRON SPONGE CAKE

Saffranskaka (Sweden)

This sponge cake is not very traditional, but it is increasingly common for the Christmas season.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 8 pieces

200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) milk
0.5 g/0.02 oz saffron (page 75)
270 g/10 oz (1¼ cups plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
2 eggs
240 g/8½ oz (2 cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Combine the butter and milk in a pan and heat until the butter has melted. Leave to cool.

Crush the saffron with 1 tablespoon of the sugar and add it to the cooled butter and milk mixture.

Place the eggs and the remaining sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat at medium speed until pale and fluffy. Sift in the dry ingredients, add the butter and milk mixture, and beat at low speed until just combined.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan, smooth the surface and bake for about 40 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

Top to bottom: Glazed Orange Sponge Cake with Candied Orange Peel / Ambrosia Cake (page 412); Tiger Cake / Marble Cake (page 410); Banana Bread (page 415); Sponge Cake Glazed in Almonds and Caramel / Tosca Cake (page 410)

PEAR CAKE WITH CARDAMOM

Päronkaka med kardemumma (Sweden)

This is quite a common recipe in the southern parts of Sweden. Sometimes it has a sprinkling of flaked almonds and other times not.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Makes: 8 pieces

butter, to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
2 medium ripe pears, cored and cut into 1-cm/½-inch pieces
1 tablespoon sugar
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
whipped cream or Vanilla Ice Cream (page 534), to serve

For the batter
3 eggs
350 g/12 oz (1¾ cups) sugar
270 g/9½ oz (2¼ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 teaspoon finely ground cardamom seeds
3 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
30 g/1 oz (2 tablespoons) butter, cut into small pieces

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Mix the pears with the sugar and vanilla sugar in a bowl.

To make the batter, place the eggs and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat until pale and fluffy. Mix all of the dry ingredients together in another bowl and sift them into the egg and sugar mixture. Stir until just combined.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan. Press the pears down into the batter and place the pieces of butter on top. Bake for about 45 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

Leave the cake to cool a little before serving with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.

FINNISH SPONGE CAKE

Sokerikakku (Finland)

In Finland, sponge cakes are technically quite similar to those made in Sweden, in the sense that sugar and eggs are whisked until pale and fluffy rather than butter and sugar as is the case, for example, in Denmark. One key difference though is that they rarely contain any butter, at least not in older recipes. I think that this could be an expression of Finland's history, marked by many wars, and because of this frequent shortages in foods. Today you will find cakes in the country that have recipes very similar to those of any other Western country, but the recipe below is made the way most traditional books in Finland would describe it, and the way a Finnish grandmother would bake it.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 8 pieces

butter, to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
4 eggs
180 g/6½ oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
130 g/4½ oz (1 cup plus 1 tablespoon) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Place the eggs and sugar in a bowl and whisk until pale and fluffy. Sift in the flour and baking powder and stir with the whisk until there are no lumps.

Scrape the batter into the prepared loaf pan, smooth the surface and bake for 30 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

COFFEE CAKE WITHOUT COFFEE

Kaffekaka (Sweden)

The name of this classic Swedish cake, for which most recipes seem to originate in the 1960s and 1970s, does not come from it containing coffee but rather from its preparation time, which was said to be so fast that you could make it while the coffee was brewing if you got unexpected guests over for *fika* (pages 44–9).

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 8 pieces

30 g/1 oz (2 tablespoons) butter, at room temperature, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
50 g/2 oz (¼ cup) sugar
1 egg, beaten
100 g/3½ oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) milk

For the topping
1 teaspoon ground cassia cinnamon
2 tablespoons sugar
30 g/1 oz (2 tablespoons) butter, at room temperature

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Butter a 20-cm/8-inch cast-iron frying pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Place the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat until pale and fluffy. Add the egg, then the flour and baking powder and finish by adding the milk. Mix until combined.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cast-iron frying pan. Sprinkle the cinnamon and sugar on top, then press lumps of the butter into the batter. Bake for 15 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70. Leave to cool a bit before taking the cake out of the pan.

For image see page 419

BANANA BREAD

Banankaka (Sweden)

Bananas were introduced to the Nordics in the early twentieth century and, as far as I have been able to find out, the first shipment seems to have been received in Oslo. When you have bananas, you inevitably end up having overripe, brown bananas as needing to be turned into banana bread. Not unique to the Nordics in any way, banana bread is still an undeniable part of our food culture.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 8 pieces

150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons) butter, at room temperature, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
270 g/9½ oz (1⅓ cups) sugar
2 eggs
300 g/11 oz (2½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)
2 teaspoons baking powder
4 ripe bananas, mashed
50 ml/2 fl oz (3½ tablespoons) cold coffee

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Place the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat at medium speed until pale and fluffy. Add the eggs, one by one, making sure each is fully incorporated before you add the next. Sift all of the dry ingredients together into the bowl and mix gently until just combined. Add the mashed bananas and the coffee and stir until everything is just combined.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan, smooth the surface and bake for 40 minutes. The cake should be quite moist. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see page 69–70.

For image see page 413

APPLE CAKE

Eplakaka (Iceland)
Æblekage (Denmark)
Äppelkaka (Sweden)

For this cake you can use either the Basic Sponge Cake (page 404) or the Almond Sponge Cake (page 408) as a base. I like to use nicely acidic apples. Serve with whipped cream or Vanilla Custard / Pastry Cream (page 533).

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Makes: 8 pieces

250 g/9 oz (2¼ sticks) butter, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) milk
4 eggs
350 g/12 oz (1¾ cups) sugar, plus extra for the apples
320 g/11¼ oz (2⅔ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
8 acidic apples, peeled, cored and cut into wedges
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon (optional)

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Combine the butter and milk in a small pan and heat until the butter has melted. Leave to cool down to room temperature.

Whisk the eggs with the sugar in a bowl until light and fluffy. Add the butter and milk mixture and mix in thoroughly. Sift the dry ingredients into the bowl and whisk gently. Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan and smooth the surface.

Toss the apple wedges with a little sugar and cinnamon, if using. Press them into the cake batter, one at a time, so they are evenly distributed.

Bake for about 50 minutes, or until cooked through. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

Leave the cake to cool down a little before serving with whipped cream or vanilla pastry cream.

APPLE CAKE WITH NUTS AND PEARL SUGAR

Äppelkaka med mandelmassa, nötter och pärlsocker (Sweden)

This is one of my all-time favourite cakes to make in apple season. The base is a flattish sponge cake with so much topping that it almost crosses the line for what constitutes a pie. The almond paste and generous quantity of filling make it keep well too. I almost prefer it the day after it was baked.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Makes: 8 pieces

150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons) butter, melted and left to cool down to room temperature (use a large enough pot to avoid having to use another bowl to mix the batter in), plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
135 g/4½ oz (½ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
2 teaspoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
180 g/6½ oz (1½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) milk
160 g/5½ oz Almond Paste (page 531), grated
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
4 large cooking apples, peeled, cored and cut into pieces of about 2 cm/¾ inch
80 g/3 oz (⅔ cup) chopped hazelnuts
2 tablespoons pearl sugar

Preheat the oven to 175°F/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Add the sugar to the cooled melted butter, then add the vanilla sugar, and sift in the flour and baking powder. Mix until combined. Add the milk together with the almond paste and mix again until the milk has combined into the batter. It is fine if there are still some lumps of almond paste left.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan, smooth the surface, then dust with ground cinnamon. Arrange the apple pieces evenly over the top and press them into the batter. Sprinkle with chopped hazelnuts and pearl sugar and bake for 50 minutes. It's important that the apples are completely baked through in the middle of the cake. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

For image see page 421

NORWEGIAN APPLE CAKE

Eplekake (Norway)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 8 pieces

200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
220 g/7¾ oz (1 cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar, plus extra for the apples
3 eggs
240 g/8½ oz (2 cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
zest of 1 lemon
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) milk
3–4 apples, peeled, cored and sliced
2 teaspoons ground cassia cinnamon
whipped cream or vanilla ice cream, to serve (optional)

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Place the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat at medium speed until pale and fluffy. Lower the speed and add the eggs, one by one, making sure each is fully incorporated before you add the next. Mix the flour and baking powder together in a separate bowl and sift it into the egg and sugar mixture. Mix until combined. Add the lemon zest and milk and stir until combined.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan and smooth the surface. Press the sliced apples down into the batter and sprinkle the cinnamon and 2 tablespoons of sugar on top. Bake for about 40 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

Leave the cake to cool down a little before serving with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.

UPSIDE DOWN CAKE

Keikauskakku (Finland)
Upp och ner kaka (Sweden)

I imagine that this is a sort of 1950s evolution of the classic French tarte Tatin. If you look in old magazines from when it was popularized it was most often made with canned fruit. The recipe below is made with fresh fruit so it has sugar added. If you want to go all 1950s authentic you can use canned fruit too (like pineapple slices), but that's usually canned in syrup so you might want to skip, or at least decrease, the amount of sugar you mix with the fruits.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Makes: 8 pieces

butter, to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
2 eggs
220 g/7½ oz (1 cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
1 tablespoon orange juice
180 g/6½ oz (1½ cups) weak (soft)
  wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
whipped cream, to serve (optional)

For the fruit topping
250 g/9 oz fruit, such as apples, pears,
  peaches or rhubarb
90 g/3¼ oz (⅓ cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
30 g/1 oz (2 tablespoons) butter, melted
zest of 1 lemon

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 22–24-cm/8½–9½-inch cake pan or cast-iron pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

For the fruit topping, cut the fruit into pieces and mix with the sugar in a bowl. Add the melted butter and lemon zest and stir until mixed. Spread the fruit mixture out in the bottom of the prepared cake pan.

Place the eggs and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat until pale and fluffy. Add the orange juice and 75 ml/2½ fl oz (⅓ cup) just-boiled water. Mix all of the dry ingredients together in a separate bowl and sift it into the egg and sugar mixture. Mix gently until combined.

Scrape the batter over the fruits in the cake pan, smooth the surface and bake for 50–55 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

When the cake is done, turn the pan upside down onto a plate. Wait for 5 minutes before you remove the pan, then leave the cake to cool down a little before serving with whipped cream, if liked.

For image see page opposite

Top to bottom: Coffee Cake Without Coffee (page 415); Upside Down Cake (page 418) using canned fruit; Rice Flour Sponge Cake (page 405)

SEMOLINA SPONGE CAKE

Mannagrynskaka (Sweden)

This is not a very old recipe in Nordic baking. I have not been able to find many recipes from before 1990 and I wonder whether it isn't simply a Swedified version of Lebanese *Nammoura*. I imagine that the original cake was baked in Sweden by Lebanese immigrants and that it has been adapted a little: first by skipping the tahini and then gradually tweaking other parts of the original recipe. The frozen raspberries that are now routinely added to the cake just before baking seem to be the most recent addition and they are not in every recipe.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Resting time: 15 minutes
Makes: 12 pieces

200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
2 tablespoons weak (soft) wheat flour
400 g/14 oz (2¼ cups) semolina
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 teaspoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) natural (plain) yogurt
220 g/7¾ oz (1 cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
200 g (1 cup plus 1 tablespoon) frozen raspberries (optional)

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Melt the butter in a small pan over a medium heat.

Mix the wheat flour, semolina, baking powder and vanilla sugar together in a bowl.

Mix the yogurt and sugar together in another bowl. Add the yogurt and sugar mixture to the semolina mixture, then add the melted butter and mix until combined.

Leave the batter to rest at room temperature for 15 minutes before scraping it into the prepared cake pan. Press the frozen raspberries into the batter, if using, smooth the surface and bake for 30–40 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

For image see page opposite

CURRANT CAKE

Korintkake (Norway)
Korintkaka (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 8 pieces

breadcrumbs, to coat
200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, at room temperature, plus extra to grease
200 g/7 oz (1 cup) sugar
4 eggs
2 teaspoons baking powder
250 g/9 oz (2 cups plus 1 tablespoon) weak (soft) wheat flour
pinch of salt
125 g/4½ oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons) currants (Corinthian raisins)
freshly ground cardamom seeds or bitter almond oil, to flavour (optional)

Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 23 x 13 x 8 cm/9 x 5 x 3 inch loaf pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Combine the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl and whisk together until pale and fluffy. Add the eggs, one by one, making sure each is fully incorporated before you add the next.

Sift the dry ingredients into the bowl and beat in thoroughly. Mix in the currants, together with the flavourings, if using.

Scrape the batter into the prepared loaf pan and smooth the surface. Bake the cake for 40 minutes, or until cooked through. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

Clockwise from top left: Danish Spiced Honey Cake (page 426); Semolina Sponge Cake (page 420); Mother Monsen's Cake (page 422); Apple Cake with Nuts and Pearl Sugar (page 416)

DATE CAKE WITH CARAMEL SAUCE

Döðluterta með karamellusósu (Iceland)

I have not been able to find a solid lead as to the origins of this cake. There are some theories that indicate that it might have been brought to Iceland from England in the mid-nineteenth century. To me this recipe is very typical to Iceland and many other parts of the world that were hard to get to before modern transportation or that did not have a warm climate. If you could not grow fresh fruit yourself, and it was too far away to ship it in, you had to use things that shipped and stored well, like dates, raisins or prunes.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Makes: 12 pieces

120 g/4 oz (1 stick) butter, at room temperature, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
240 g/8½ oz (1¾ cups) pitted dates
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)
80 g/3 oz (¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
2 eggs
180 g/6½ oz (1½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
2 teaspoons baking powder

For the caramel sauce
200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter
200 g/7 oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) brown sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) cream

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Place the dates in a pan and add enough water to barely cover them. Bring to the boil over a medium–high heat, then remove from the heat and leave to stand for a few minutes. Add the bicarbonate of soda (baking soda) and stir well until the dates turn into a thick paste.

Place the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat at medium speed until pale and fluffy. Lower the speed and add the eggs, one by one, making sure each is fully incorporated before you add the next. Sift in all the dry ingredients and stir until combined. Finish by adding the date paste and stirring carefully until the batter is well mixed.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan and bake for about 35 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70. Leave the cake to cool down in the pan for a few minutes before serving with the caramel sauce.

Make the caramel sauce by melting the butter in a pan over a medium heat. Add the rest of the ingredients and simmer for about 5 minutes, while stirring.

Serve the warm sauce with the cake.

MOTHER MONSEN'S CAKE

Mor Monsen (Norway)

This is a really rich kind of sponge cake that for many Norwegians is indispensable for Christmas. In Norwegian it's just called *Mor Monsen*, meaning Mother Monsen, Monsen being a Norwegian family name. The word 'cake' is usually omitted. This cake was first described during the mid-nineteenth century in a book by Norwegian poet and cookery book writer Hanna Winsnes. It is unclear exactly who this mother Monsen, after whom the cake is named, might be.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 12 pieces

250 g/9 oz (2¼ sticks) butter, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
250 g/9 oz (1¼ cups) sugar
6 eggs
zest of 1 lemon
250 g/9 oz (2 cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder

For the topping
50 g/2 oz (¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons) almonds, blanched and chopped
50 g/2 oz (⅓ cup) raisins
4 tablespoons pearl sugar

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 20 x 30-cm/8 x 12-inch shallow cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Place the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat at medium speed until pale and fluffy. Lower the speed and add the eggs, one by one, making sure each is fully incorporated before you add the next. Add the lemon zest. Mix the flour and baking powder together in a separate bowl and sift it into the sugar and butter mixture. Mix until combined.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan and smooth the surface. Sprinkle the almonds, raisins and pearl sugar on top and bake for 20 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

Leave the cake to cool in the pan for a few minutes before turning the cake out and leaving it to cool completely on a wire rack.

For image see page 421

CARROT CAKE

Morotskaka (Sweden)

Carrot cake is one of the oldest cakes in the world, and most food historians seem to agree that its roots can be traced back to medieval carrot puddings. How long it's been baked in the Nordics though seems to be pretty much impossible to find out. And even though the carrot cake had a well-documented revival in England during World War II, when naturally sweet carrots were used in many baked goods instead of sugar as the latter was being rationed, I think that what most of us imagine when we think of carrot cake today is a version that comes from America: sweet, spiced, moist cake glazed with cream cheese frosting.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Makes: 12 pieces

butter, to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
3 eggs
270 g/9½ oz (1⅓ cups) sugar
180 g/6½ oz (1½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
3 teaspoons baking powder
1½ teaspoons ground cassia cinnamon
1½ teaspoons crushed cardamom seeds
1 teaspoon grated ginger
good pinch of salt
250 g/9 oz carrots, grated
150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) sunflower oil

For the frosting
60 g/2¼ oz (½ stick) butter, at room temperature
100 g/3½ oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) cream cheese
240 g/8½ oz (2 cups) icing (confectioners') sugar
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
zest of 1 lime

Preheat the oven to 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Place the eggs and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat at medium speed until pale and fluffy. Add the dry ingredients and lower the speed while you keep beating. Finish by adding the grated carrots and sunflower oil and mix until well combined.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan, smooth the surface and bake for about 50 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

Leave the cake to cool down completely before you add the frosting. Mix all the ingredients for the frosting together in a bowl and spread it over the top of the cake.

CARDAMOM CAKE

Kardemummakaka (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 8 pieces

125 g/4½ oz (1 stick) butter, at room temperature, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
1 tablespoon finely ground cardamom seeds
225 g/8 oz (1 cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
1 egg
200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) sour cream
400 g/14 oz (3⅓ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
pearl sugar, to decorate

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan or a 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Combine the butter, ground cardamom and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat together well. Add the egg and incorporate fully before adding the sour cream.

Sift the flour and baking powder together into the bowl and then mix until smooth but not for longer. The batter will be fairly stiff.

Scrape the batter into the prepared loaf pan and sprinkle the surface with plenty of pearl sugar. Bake for about 40 minutes, or until cooked through. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

Turn the cake out of the pan and leave to cool on a wire rack before serving.

SPICED HONEY CAKE

Honningkake (Norway)

Sometimes this cake is served plain and sometimes it is glazed with dark chocolate and sprinkled with flaked almonds.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Makes: 8 pieces

100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, melted and cooled, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
4 eggs, separated
250 g/9 oz (1¼ cups) sugar
250 g/9 oz (1 cup plus 2 tablespoons) honey
½ teaspoon ground cloves
½ teaspoon ground ginger
½ teaspoon ground black pepper
250 g/9 oz (2 cups plus 1 tablespoon) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
pinch of salt

Preheat the oven to 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2. Butter a 21 x 11 x 6-cm/8½ x 4½ x 2½-inch loaf pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Whisk the egg yolks and sugar in a bowl until pale and creamy. Add the honey, melted butter and spices to the egg mixture. Sift the dry ingredients together into the bowl and mix in thoroughly.

Whisk the egg whites to soft peaks in a bowl, then fold them into the cake batter. Scrape the batter into the prepared loaf pan and smooth the surface. Bake the cake for about 50 minutes, or until golden and cooked through. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

Turn the cake out of the loaf pan and leave to cool on a wire rack before icing, if you like.

For image see page opposite

Top to bottom: Faroese Green Almond Sponge Cake (page 432); Spiced Honey Cake (page 424); Basic Sponge Cake (page 404); Gingerbread Cake (page 427)

DANISH SPICED HONEY CAKE

Honninskage (Denmark)

This classic Danish cake is a kind of spiced sponge cake partially sweetened with honey, filled with buttercream and glazed with chocolate. There is no real consensus as to how this cake should be seasoned and recipes vary. It can be spiced with any combination or all of the following: ginger, cloves, cassia cinnamon, nutmeg, orange peel.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Makes: 15 pieces

2 eggs
125 g/4½ oz (½ cup) brown sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
400 g/14 oz (3⅓ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 teaspoon ground cloves
1 teaspoon ground cassia cinnamon
250 g/9 oz (1 cup) honey, melted
50 ml/1¾ fl oz (3½ tablespoons) coffee, cold

For the filling
250 g/9 oz (2¼ sticks) butter, at room temperature
180 g/6½ oz (1½ cups) icing (confectioners') sugar
2 teaspoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
2 egg yolks

For the chocolate ganache
150 g/5 oz dark (bittersweet) chocolate
150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) cream

Preheat the oven to 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2. Line a 25 x 30-cm/10 x 12-inch cake pan or baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Place the eggs and brown sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat at medium speed until pale and fluffy. Mix the dry ingredients together in a separate bowl, then add them to the egg and sugar mixture, little by little, alternating with adding the honey, 100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) water and the coffee. Stir until combined.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan or baking sheet, smooth the surface and bake for about 40 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70. Leave the cake to cool down in the pan while you make the filling.

For the filling, beat the butter and icing (confectioners') sugar together in a bowl until pale and fluffy. Add the vanilla sugar and egg yolks and stir until combined.

Cut the cake horizontally in half with a long serrated knife. Spread the filling onto one of the halves and put the other one on top.

Make the chocolate ganache before serving. Melt the chocolate in a pan over a low heat while stirring. Keep stirring while you add the cream, little by little. Pour the ganache over the cake and wait a few minutes before serving the cake, cut into slices.

For image see page 421

EGG-WHITE SPONGE CAKE / SILVER CAKE

Sølvkake (Norway)
Silverkaka (Sweden)

The only reason I would ever bake this cake is if I had a lot of leftover egg whites. Wait, no. That's not even true. If I had leftover egg whites I would make meringue instead. The fact is that I would never make this cake. It's really not a favourite of mine (not as tasty as normal sponge cake but rather more like just sponge) but it's something I do remember being treated to when I was growing up. In our wasteful world of today most people who are left with excess egg whites are most likely to throw them away and I don't think that this recipe will be around much longer.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 8 pieces

100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, at room temperature, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
160 g/5½ oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) sugar
225 g/8 oz (1¾ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 tablespoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536) and/or zest of 1 lemon
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) milk
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) egg whites (3–4 depending on size)

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Combine the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat at medium speed until pale and fluffy. Sift the flour and baking powder together into the bowl and mix until fully incorporated, but the mixture should be quite dry. Add the vanilla sugar and/or lemon zest and the milk and mix until smooth.

In a separate, perfectly clean, dry bowl, whisk the egg whites to stiff peaks, then fold them into the batter. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan, smooth the surface and bake for about 40 minutes, or until the cake is golden and cooked through. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

Turn the cake out of the pan and leave to cool on a wire rack before cutting into it.

GINGERBREAD CAKE

Brun formakaka (Faroe Islands)
Brúnkaka / Bruntorte (Iceland)
Pehmeä maustekekku (Finland)
Mjuk pepparkaka (Sweden)

Most recipes for this cake contain some kind of cultured dairy product like *filmjölk*, *gräddfil* or yogurt, and most recipes are leavened with bicarbonate of soda (baking soda).

In Sweden it is quite common to add Sugared Lingonberries (page 514) and on the Faroe Islands, a couple of handfuls of raisins are often added to the batter.

In some more recent recipes cardamom is used in addition to the spices in this recipe but as much as I (like most Swedes) love cardamom, I can't see what good it does in this recipe.

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Makes: 8 pieces

100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, melted and cooled, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
2 eggs
180 g/6½ oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) cultured milk or cream
180 g/6½ oz (1½ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 teaspoons bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)
1 teaspoon ground cassia cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground cloves
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) Sugared Lingonberries (page 514) or a few handfuls of raisins

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 23 x 13 x 8 cm/9 x 5 x 3 inch loaf pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Whisk the eggs and sugar in a large bowl until light and fluffy, then add the cultured dairy of your choice. Sift the dry ingredients into the bowl and whisk everything together gently. Add the melted butter and the lingonberries or raisins and mix in gently but evenly. The batter will be fairly stiff.

Scrape the batter into the prepared loaf pan, smooth the surface and bake for about 50 minutes. If the surface browns too much during the cooking, then carefully open the oven door and cover the cake with aluminium foil. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see page 69–70.

Turn the cake out of the pan and leave to cool on a wire rack before cutting into it.

For image see page 425

LIGHT SPONGE CAKE WITH COCONUT FROSTING

Solkaka (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 8 pieces

butter, to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
2 eggs
180 g/6½ oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
120 g/4 oz (1 cup) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder

For the frosting
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter
90 g/3¼ oz (½ cup) sugar
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
1 egg yolk
50 g/2 oz (½ cup plus 2 tablespoons)
  desiccated coconut

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Place the eggs and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat at medium speed until pale and fluffy. Add the rest of the ingredients and 100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) just-boiled water and stir until just combined.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan, smooth the surface and bake for about 35 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70. Leave the cake to cool before you put on the frosting.

To make the frosting, melt the butter in a small pan, add the sugar and bring to the boil. Add the vanilla sugar, egg yolk and half of the desiccated coconut. Spread the frosting on top of the cake and sprinkle with the rest of the coconut. Allow the frosting to set before cutting into it.

SPONGE CAKE AND BUTTER ICING SQUARES WITH COCONUT

Silviakaka (Sweden)

I have not been able to find out why this cake is named the way it is. Silvia is a woman's name, and coincidently the name of the current Swedish queen, although her royal highness seems to have nothing to do with this whatsoever, as I have found recipes in different magazines from well before she became the queen of Sweden. Regardless, it is a delicious cake and one of my personal favourites.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 15 squares

butter, to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
3 eggs
255 g/9 oz (1¼ cups) sugar
180 g/6½ oz (1½ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
coconut flakes, to decorate

For the butter icing
150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons)
  butter
170 g/6 oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
2 egg yolks
2 tablespoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536)

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 30 x 40-cm/12 x 16-inch shallow cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Whisk the eggs and sugar together in a bowl until pale and fluffy, then add 150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) water and sift the flour and baking powder into the mixture. Mix until fully incorporated.

Scrape the batter into the prepared baking sheet, smooth the surface and bake for about 20 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

Leave the cake to cool and prepare the butter icing. Melt the butter in a small pot, then remove from the heat and add the remaining ingredients. Mix well and return the pot to a low heat. Stir and keep it on the heat until it has thickened a little. Spread the icing over the cake while it is still a little warmer than room temperature. The trick here is to get the temperature right. If it's too hot the icing will split and soak entirely into the cake. If it's too cold it will just sit on top. You want the middle ground where some of it soaks into the cake but enough remains intact. Leave to cool completely before you decorate with coconut flakes and cut the cake into squares.

COCONUT SPONGE CAKE

Kokoskaka (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 8 pieces

150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons)
  butter, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
3 eggs
180 g/6½ oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
30 g/1 oz (¼ cup) weak (soft)
  wheat flour
200 g/7 oz (2½ cups) desiccated coconut,
  plus extra to coat
1 teaspoon baking powder

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Melt the butter in a small pan over a medium heat and leave it to cool. Place the eggs and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat until pale and fluffy. Add the melted butter to the sugar and egg mixture. Mix the flour, coconut and baking powder in a separate bowl and add it to the batter, while stirring carefully, until combined.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan, smooth the surface and bake for about 45 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

ICELANDIC CHRISTMAS CAKE

Jólakaka (Iceland)

This Icelandic classic is definitely eaten for Christmas, but funnily enough it's also eaten the rest of the year, still under the same name. It doesn't always contain chocolate, but many recent recipes seem to do so. If you want to go all old-fashioned, remove the chocolate and add double the amount of raisins instead.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 8 pieces

150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons)
  butter, at room temperature, plus
  extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
150 g/5 oz (¾ cup) sugar
1 egg
250 g/9 oz (2 cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
150 ml5 fl oz (⅔ cup) milk
50 g/2 oz (⅓ cup) raisins
50 g/2 oz dark chocolate, chopped

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Place the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat at medium speed until pale and fluffy. Lower the speed and add the egg. Mix all the dry ingredients together in a separate bowl and then sift them into the butter and egg mixture. Finish by adding the milk, raisins and chocolate. Mix until combined.

Scrape the batter into the prepared loaf pan, smooth the surface and bake for about 45 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

Leave the cake to cool down in the pan before unmoulding it and leaving it to cool completely on a wire rack.

CHOCOLATE AND COCONUT GLAZED CHOCOLATE SPONGE CAKE

Mokkabitar i Skuffu (Faroe Islands)
Skúffukaka (Iceland)
Mokkaruudut (Finland)
Chokolade drømmekage (Denmark)
Kärleksmums (Sweden)

This cake can be made in an ordinary cake or loaf pan, but it is also often made in a sheet pan and cut into small square pieces after glazing.

If you are intending to make it in a full-sized sheet pan, a double quantity of the cake batter will be sufficient. If you choose this format the cake will, and should be, slightly thinner, perhaps 4 cm/1½ inches thick when baked, and you will have to reduce the baking time to 25–30 minutes rather than the 40 minutes mentioned below. The same way of verifying the 'doneness' of the cake can be used though.

Regardless of whether you make a single batch in an ordinary pan or a double batch in a sheet pan, the cake should be left in the pan until it is cool and glazed before being removed, otherwise the glaze will run off. Plus, the sheet-pan size won't lift easily in one piece.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 8 pieces

For the cake batter
250 g/9 oz (2¼ sticks) butter, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) milk
4 eggs
350 g/12 oz (1¾ cups) sugar
320 g/11¼ oz (2⅔ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
30 g/1 oz (⅓ cup) cocoa powder

To decorate
Chocolate Icing (page 530)
1 good handful desiccated coconut

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Combine the butter and milk in a small pan and heat until the butter has melted. Leave to cool down to room temperature.

Whisk the eggs with the sugar in a bowl until light and fluffy. Add the butter and milk mixture and mix in thoroughly.

Sift the dry ingredients together into the bowl and whisk everything in gently.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan and smooth the surface. Bake for about 40 minutes, or until cooked through. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

Leave the cake to cool while you make the chocolate icing and then spread it onto the cooled cake. Before the icing sets, sprinkle generously with desiccated coconut.

For image see page opposite

CHOCOLATE, COFFEE AND COCONUT GLAZED CHOCOLATE SPONGE CAKE (VARIATION 1)

Mokkabitar i skuffu (Faroe Islands)
Mockabitar (Sweden)

Follow the recipe for Chocolate and Coconut Glazed Chocolate Sponge Cake, see left, but when you make the icing, substitute water in the recipe with the same amount of cold, strong coffee.

Chocolate and Coconut Glazed Sponge Cake (page 430)

MAJ'S SPRING BITES (VARIATION 2)

Majs vårbitar (Sweden)

Follow the recipe for Chocolate and Coconut Glazed Chocolate Sponge Cake (see page 430), making the cake in a sheet pan, but replace the cocoa powder in the sponge cake batter with 2 teaspoons of Vanilla Sugar (page 536) instead.

FAROESE GREEN ALMOND SPONGE CAKE

Grønakaka (Faroe Islands)

Follow the recipe for Chocolate and Coconut Glazed Chocolate Sponge Cake (see page 430) but omit the cocoa powder in the sponge cake batter and skip the coconut topping. Instead add 2 teaspoons of almond extract and 1 tablespoon of green food colouring to the sponge cake batter.

For image see page 425

SWEDISH GOOEY CHOCOLATE CAKE

Kladdkaka (Sweden)

Kladdkaka is a relatively recent addition to Swedish cake culture. Its origins are a bit unclear and the accounts on where it came from are as colourful as they are conflicting. One thing is certain though: there was no *kladdkaka* before the mid 1970s. One can also assume without going out too much on a limb that the unleavened, very gooey and soft cake of today is the result of naturally occurring cake evolution. Someone had a really good recipe for chocolate cake, perhaps a brownie one, or why not something more central European in style? The same person, in the heat of the moment, forgets to add baking powder only to realize his or her mistake halfway through the cooking process. They then remove the undercooked cake from the oven and they are astounded by its deliciousness. Those character traits that were liked with the first failed cake have then, through generations of cakes, been reinforced, whilst those that weren't liked have been changed to improve it. On a timeline we can see that the *kladdkaka* of today contains less flour than the one twenty years ago, meaning that even if it isn't technically cooked it won't taste starchy. We can see that the cakes of yesteryear are made from soft butter creamed with the other ingredients like any other cake, whilst those of today are most often made from melted butter effectively making sure as little air as possible is incorporated into the cake, making it even gooier.

Kladdkaka only exists in Sweden and during its brief existence it has gained a huge following. It is actually the most common recipe search from Swedish websites. If you type it into your internet search engine you will get well over 650,000 hits.

There are as many conflicting ideas on how to eat this cake as there are recipes for it. Some like it warm with ice cream, some like it at room temperature with nothing, and I like it as my wife – whose recipe this is – will tell you to eat it: cold from the refrigerator with whipped cream on the side.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 8 pieces

butter, to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
200 g/7 oz (1 cup) sugar
good pinch of salt
40 g/1½ (6⅔ tablespoons) cocoa powder
1 tablespoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons)
  butter, melted and cooled
2 eggs
125 g/4½ oz (1 cup) weak (soft) wheat flour

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch springform cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Add the sugar, salt, cocoa and vanilla sugar to the cooled, melted butter and mix in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment until no lumps remain. Add the eggs, one at a time, making sure each is fully incorporated before you add the next. Add the flour by sifting it into the butter mixture and incorporate it fully but do not overwork it.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan, smooth the surface and bake in the oven. In my oven it is perfect after exactly 13 minutes on an egg timer. This cake requires a delicate balance of liquid and dry. It should barely set in the oven and form a sort of skin. It should be very wobbly when still warm.

For image see page 435

SWEDISH GOOEY CHOCOLATE CAKE, (VARIATION 1)

Kladdkaka (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 12 pieces

200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
200 g/7 oz dark (semisweet) chocolate,
  broken into small pieces
4 eggs
250 g/9 oz (1¼ cups) sugar
40 g/1½ oz (⅓ cup) weak (soft) wheat flour
good pinch of sea salt

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch springform cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Melt the butter in a medium pan over a low heat. Add the chocolate and keep melting everything together while stirring. Remove the pan from the heat and add the rest of the ingredients while you keep stirring until well combined.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan, smooth the surface and bake for 15–20 minutes. It should be sticky on the inside. If the cake gets too dark, cover it with aluminium foil for the last 5 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

SWEDISH GOOEY CHOCOLATE CAKE MADE FROM WHITE CHOCOLATE

Vit chokladkladdkaka (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 12 pieces

100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter,
  plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
100 g/3½ oz white chocolate, broken
  into small pieces
180 g/6½ oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
½ teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
pinch of salt
2 eggs
120 g/4 oz (1 cup) weak (soft) wheat flour

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Melt the butter in a pan over a low heat. Add the chocolate to the melted butter and stir until the chocolate melts. Take the pan off the heat and add the rest of the ingredients. Stir until well combined.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan, smooth the surface and bake for 15–20 minutes. The cake should still be sticky when you take it out. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70. Leave the cake to cool down before serving.

For image see page 435

SWEDISH GOOEY LEMON CAKE

Citronkladdkaka (Sweden)

This cake is yet another mutation of the Swedish Gooey Chocolate Cake (page 432). This version contains no chocolate and the key thing here is that the cake should be very blonde; it should barely brown at all and be as gooey as the original chocolate cake.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 8 pieces

150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons) butter, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
170 g/6 oz (¾ cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
100 g/3½ oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons) plain (all-purpose) flour
2 eggs
zest and juice of 2 lemons (about 75 ml/ 2½ fl oz/⅓ cup juice)

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Melt the butter in a pot over a low heat, then remove the pot from the stove and add the sugar, vanilla sugar and flour. Stir until well mixed, then add the eggs and stir until combined. Add the lemon zest and juice and stir until combined.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan, smooth the surface and bake for 13 minutes. It should be very wobbly when warm.

JAM SQUARES WITH OATMEAL

Syltrutor med havregryn (Sweden)

This is another cake that is, for me, deeply connected to childhood memories. My cousin's grandmother used to make these (among many other delicious cakes) and I remember having them in front of the fire in their weekend cottage by the lake of a little village called Gåxsjö. They were stored in an old biscuit tin with crackly baking (parchment) paper. They were intensely delicious with wild raspberry jam and the fire smelled and sounded of burning pine logs.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 18 pieces

150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons) butter, at room temperature, cut into smaller pieces, plus extra to grease
270 g/9½ oz (2¼ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
90 g/3¼ oz (½ cup) sugar
3 teaspoons baking powder
1 egg
200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup) jam, such as lingonberry or raspberry (pages 510–11)

For the topping
50 g/2 oz (½ cup) rolled oats
90 g/3¼ oz (½ cup) sugar
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 20 x 30-cm/8 x 12-inch shallow cake pan. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Start by making the dough. Place all of the dry ingredients in a bowl and add the butter. Work the dough with your hands until crumbly, then add the egg. Press the dough out into the bottom of the prepared cake pan, then spread the jam on top of the dough.

Make the topping by mixing all the dry ingredients in a bowl. Melt the butter in a pan over a medium heat and mix it with the dry ingredients. Spread the topping on top of the jam.

Bake for about 20 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70. Leave the cake to cool before cutting it into 4-cm/1½-inch squares.

Top to bottom: Swedish Gooey Chocolate Cake (page 432); Swedish Gooey Chocolate Cake made from White Chocolate (page 433)

LAYER CAKES AND TORTES

Previous page: Kullahalvön seen from Bjärehalvön, Skåne, Sweden, summer 2017.

We are pretty serious about our layer cakes in the Nordics and the variation in recipes is huge. Common denominators though are that they are often based on some type of sponge cake and more often than not contain berries or jam. Layer cakes are often served for birthday celebrations.

Especially in Scandinavia, layer cakes often make use of whipped cream either as a filling or to thickly glaze the outside of the cake. This is something that's quite rare in most other parts of the world, where other frostings and glazes are more common.

In my early twenties I used to live in Paris, working in some very good restaurants and generally having a great and very interesting time. However, when the time came to celebrate my first birthday in France, which was also my first birthday spent outside of Sweden, I was struck by a sensation of not belonging, and I missed home intensely. This feeling was triggered by the fact that my colleagues at work honoured my special day with a Paris-Brest pastry after the staff lunch. I ate my piece of the admittedly very tasty and perfectly prepared wreath of Frenchness and tried to look happy. Both missing home and at the same time feeling very ungrateful and ridiculous for not enjoying the cake I was given by my friends, just because it wasn't the cake I was used to. In short, I felt like a silly, spoilt child unable to control his feelings. This was my first birthday without the classic Swedish marzipan layer cake called Princess Torte (pages 446–7).

The next year, I decided that I was going to prevent a similar situation from happening by baking my colleagues a cake of my own instead of me being given a cake again. This is, by the way, normal procedure in Sweden. You are

LAYER CAKES AND TORTES

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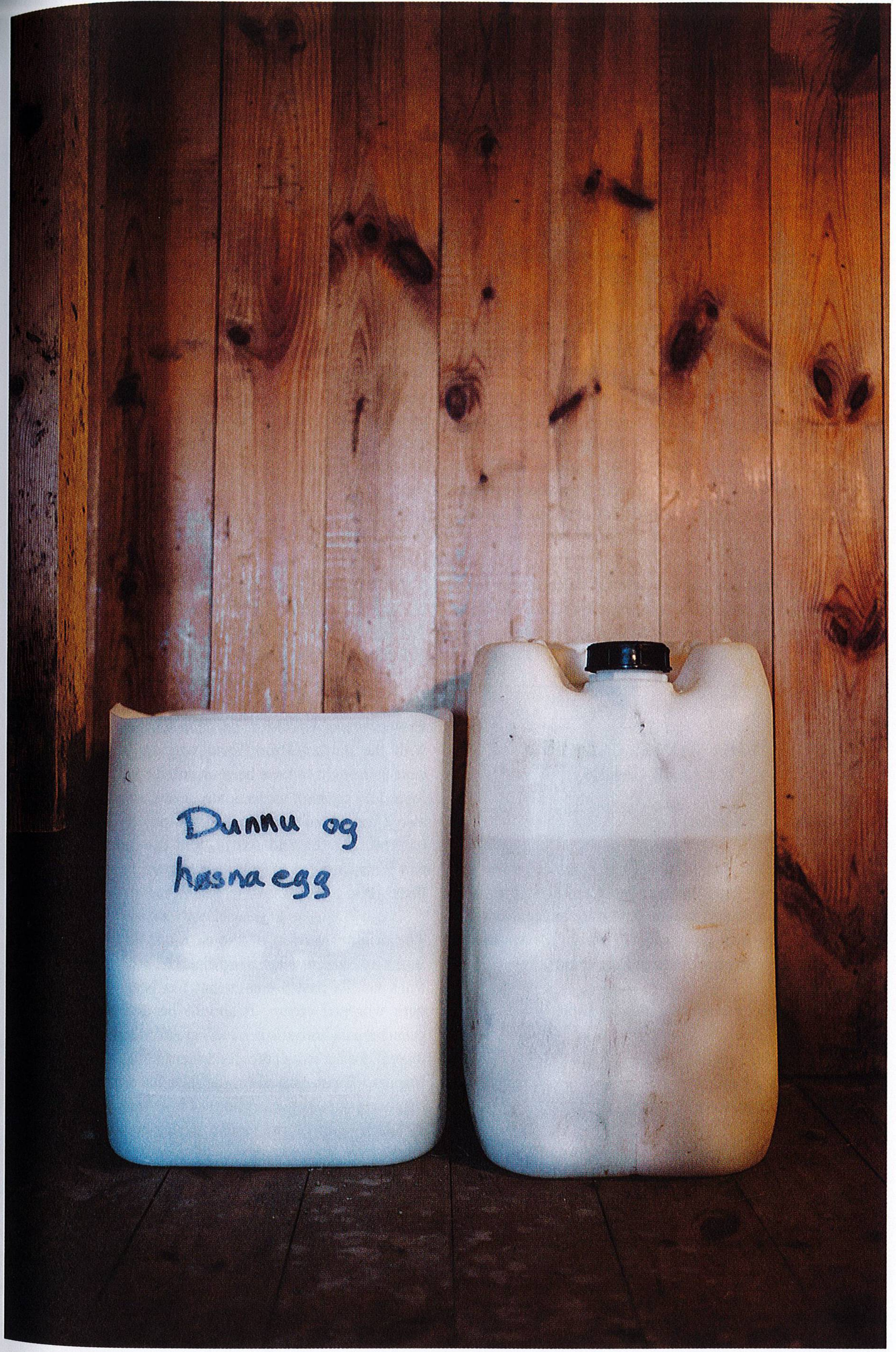
The next year, I decided that I was going to prevent a similar situation from happening by baking my colleagues a cake of my own instead of me being given a cake again. This is, by the way, normal procedure in Sweden. You are not given cake by your colleagues for your birthday, you instead give them cake. I think this is an expression of the collective Swedish passion for practical arrangements aimed at avoiding awkward situations. By bringing the cake yourself you always get your favourite cake on your birthday, and you collectively defuse any pressure for others to remember everyone's separate birthdays. You essentially remove the risk of someone not having a cake bought for them on their birthday, something that could have a devastating effect on the morale of a team. As I said, very practical.

Anyhow, I had arrived at work very early in the morning to get all of my preparations done before everyone else came in and I had made a very good-looking, green marzipan princess layer cake waiting in the refrigerator. The workday started with prep work and morning passed, so did lunch service and staff lunch and finally the time came for me to present my cake. The team sang Joyeux Anniversaire, glancing towards and evidently eagerly anticipating a slice of this Swedish green marzipan novelty. After the singing was done they dug in, slicing pieces of perfectly and lovingly made princess cake. They all sat down and started to eat, most of them took a few bites at a quick pace before they slowed down considerably. I could see them looking at each other, whispering quietly things like, 'but it's only cream inside', 'I don't understand'. This year it was reversed roles, the whole team of the restaurant I worked at sat there trying to keep a straight face but not really getting why I was so excited about this weird cake that didn't contain either buttercream or chocolate. I gave up trying to get them to understand and felt happy and content because I had the right cake for my birthday and because the world is a better place for us not always liking the same stuff – it makes life more interesting.

Juustokakku 8h
Cheesecake 8p
Vadelmapai 4h
Hallonpaj 4p
16,60€
Porkkanakakku
Morotskaka
10,50€
Hedelmäkakku 10h
Fruktkaka 10p
37,00€
Madeleine 8 hlö
ine 8 pers
34 €
Napoleon
3,50€
Porkkanaleivos
Morotsbakelse
2,90 €

Previous page: Display of layer cakes and individual pastries at Café Ekberg, Helsinki, Finland, winter 2014.

Opposite: Eggs preserved in sodium silicate for use in baking during winter, Faroe Islands, 2013.



LAYER CAKES

Lagkaka (Faroe Islands)
Bløtkake (Norway)
Täytekakku (Finland)
Lagkage (Denmark)
Tårta (Sweden)

Layer cakes and tortes are common pretty much all over the Nordic region. Almost every pastry shop will have a good selection and you will find one in most homes when someone is having a birthday party or just feels like a good *fika* (pages 44–9). It ranges from a couple of layers of sponge, some vanilla custard, berries and whipped cream, to very elaborate wedding cakes and other creations that most often feel like they are not made for eating. I can't imagine a Midsummer without a simple layer cake served with Strawberries and Cream (page 454) or a birthday without Princess Torte (right).

On the next few pages is a small selection of layered cakes and tortes, although the variety is endless and it kind of merits a book of its own.

LIGHT SPONGE CAKE FOR LAYER CAKES

Tårtbotten (Sweden)

I've included this 'light' sponge cake recipe just as a formality. But, just so that you know, I would never bake it and would definitely never use it in one of my own layer cakes. I would always use a more tasty, normal sponge cake (page 404)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 8 pieces

butter, to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
4 eggs
180 g/6½ oz (¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons)
  sugar
65 g/2½ oz (½ cup) weak (soft)
  wheat flour
75 g/2¾ oz (¼ cup plus 3 tablespoons)
  potato starch
1 teaspoon baking powder
2 teaspoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536) and/or
  grated zest of 1 lemon (optional)

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Whisk the eggs with the sugar in a bowl until light and fluffy. Sift the dry ingredients together into the bowl and whisk in gently.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan and smooth the surface. Bake for about 30 minutes, or until cooked through. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70. Leave to cool in the pan.

GREEN MARZIPAN LAYER CAKE / PRINCESS TORTE

Prinsesstårta (Sweden)

First documented in the iconic Swedish cookbook, *Prinsessornas Kokbok* (*The Princesses Cookbook*), with the name 'Green Torte', my favourite layer cake is thought to have been invented by the author, legendary cookery writer Jenny Åkerström. She was also a teacher of the three Danish princesses, Margaretha, Märtha and Astrid, and the recipe name was later changed to reflect its popularity with the three girls.

The original version of the cake consists of three layers of airy sponge sandwiched with plenty of thick vanilla pastry cream that has been lightened with whipped cream. It should be dome-shaped, covered in a smooth layer of green marzipan and dusted with icing (confectioners') sugar. Most Princess Tortes you see today just have a layer of raspberry jam between the two bottom layers and a thicker layer of the vanilla pastry cream on top of the final layer of cake to compensate. I refuse to believe that Swedish pastry chefs don't know that this is technically incorrect. I think that it is simply that most people – including traditionalists like myself – agree that the modern version is vastly superior, and so they don't bother 'bitching' about it.

There is also a version of this cake, called *operatårta*, that uses pink marzipan (which has always contained jam) but who wants to eat something that looks like an old lady's hat? (I do myself from time to time actually.)

Since I have already admitted to preferring the sacrilegious jam version of *prinsesstårta*, I might as well also confess to not really liking the sort of airy, dry 'styrofoam' sponge used for the original either. I prefer to use a heavier cake; the kind that is normally eaten in its own right, rather than just as part of a torte. The recipe for *sockerkaka* (see page 404) is perfect and you just need to bake it in a round 24-cm/9½-inch springform cake pan instead of a loaf pan.

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Makes: 8 pieces

1 quantity Vanilla Custard / Pastry Cream
  (see page 533)
7.6 g/0.28 oz gelatine (pages 76–78)
2 tablespoons sugar
400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) cream
1 circle of *Sockerkaka* (page 404)
  or *Tårtbotten* (opposite)
raspberry jam (pages 510–11) or a
  good quality purchased raspberry jam
  (optional, but not quite traditional)
350 g/12 oz green marzipan
icing (confectioners') sugar, for dusting
1 pink marzipan rose, to decorate (optional)

Follow the instructions on page 533 to make the vanilla custard / pastry cream. While it is still hot, add the gelatine, then leave it to cool.

Meanwhile, add the sugar to the cream in a bowl and whip it to soft peaks.

Once the vanilla pastry cream has cooled and thickened, whisk briskly to loosen it up a bit, then gently, but thoroughly, fold in the whipped cream. It should be smooth, velvety and thick.

Slice the cake into 3 horizontal layers with a long serrated knife. Spread either a layer of jam or a quarter of the vanilla pastry cream onto the bottom layer. Place another layer of cake on top and spread on another quarter of the vanilla cream. Finish with the third layer of cake and use the remaining vanilla cream to coat the sides and create a perfectly smooth dome on top of the cake. This cream dome should be almost shamefully thick.

Roll out the green marzipan thinly so that it is large enough to more than cover the cake. Lift it on carefully and use your hands to stretch and smooth it over the dome and down the sides, trying to avoid creases. Trim the bottom edge of any excess marzipan with a sharp knife. Just before serving, dust the surface with some icing (confectioners') sugar and decorate with the pink marzipan rose, if using.

For image see page 449

NORWEGIAN MARZIPAN LAYER CAKE

Hvit Dame (Norway)

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Makes: 10 pieces

For the sponge cake
butter, to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
6 eggs
150 g/5 oz (¾ cup) sugar
140 g/4¾ oz (1 cup plus 1 tablespoon) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder

For the meringue layer
2 egg whites
150 g/5 oz (¾ cup) sugar
70 g/2½ oz (½ cup) hazelnuts

For the filling
200 g/7 oz (¾ cup) strawberry jam (pages 510–11)
700 ml/24 fl oz (3 cups) cream, whipped

For the decoration
potato starch, for dusting
500 g/1 lb 2 oz marzipan
10 walnuts, halved
icing (confectioners') sugar, for dusting

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch springform cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Place the eggs and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment and beat at medium speed until pale and fluffy. Sift the flour and baking powder into the bowl and stir until combined.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan, smooth the surface and bake for 35–40 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70. Leave the cake to cool completely in the pan.

To make the meringue layer, place the egg whites and 50 g/2 oz (¼ cup) of the sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment and beat until white and really fluffy.

Use a food processor to mix the hazelnuts with the remaining sugar to a fine flour-like consistency, then carefully mix the nuts into the egg whites, but don't stir too much.

Preheat the oven to 100°C/212°F/Gas Mark ¼. Place a piece of baking (parchment) paper in the bottom of a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan.

Scrape the meringue into the pan, smooth the surface and bake for about 1 hour. Leave it to cool down before removing it from the pan. Carefully remove the baking paper so that the meringue does not break.

To assemble the layer cake, slice the sponge cake into 3 horizontal layers with a long serrated knife and place one layer on a cake dish. Spread a layer of the strawberry jam over this first layer of sponge cake and then place the meringue layer on top. Add another layer of strawberry jam on top of the meringue and then whipped cream on top of the jam. Add the second layer of sponge cake and again spread with strawberry jam and whipped cream. Place the last layer of sponge cake on top and then cover the whole cake with whipped cream.

Flour your work counter lightly with some potato starch and roll out the marzipan to about 2 mm/1/16 inch thick. Lift it on to the cake carefully and use your hands to stretch and smooth it over the top and down the sides, trying to avoid creases. Trim the bottom edge of any excess marzipan with a sharp knife. Just before serving, decorate it with walnuts and dust the surface with some icing (confectioners') sugar.

For image see page opposite

Top to bottom: Almond and Butter Egg-Cream Torte / Oscar II's Torte (page 468); Green Marzipan Layer Cake / Princess Torte (page 446); Norwegian Marzipan Layer Cake (page 448)

ICELANDIC HAPPY MARRIAGE CAKE

Hjonabandssaela (Iceland)

This cake is actually almost more of a pie. Or a pie crust with filling and a crumbly topping. Contrary to what the name in English leads one to believe, it is not served at weddings. I have not been able to get a consistent answer as to why it is named the way it is. Some people say that it is a happy marriage of things that you can always find in an Icelandic kitchen and others that a women should make it for her husband now and then to have a happy marriage. I tend to think/hope that the first option is the correct one.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 10 pieces

100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, at room temperature, plus extra to grease
60 g/2¼ oz (⅔ cup) rolled oats
60 g/2¼ oz (½ cup) weak (soft) wheat flour
90 g/3¼ oz (½ cup) brown sugar
½ teaspoon baking powder
1 egg

For the filling
300 g/11 oz (1 cup) rhubarb jam (pages 510–11)

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Butter a 20–24-cm/8–9½-inch pie dish.

Put all of the dry ingredients into a bowl. Add the butter and mix with your hands until crumbly. Then add the egg and stir until combined. Press two thirds of the dough into the bottom and edges of the prepared pie dish. Spread the jam over the top and then crumble the rest of the dough over the jam.

Bake for about 20 minutes, or until golden. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70. Serve warm or leave to cool. It's delicious either way.

ICELANDIC LAYER CAKE

Randalín (Iceland)

Icelandic layer cakes are often, but not exclusively, eaten around Christmas. They are usually made up of 4 layers of soft shortbread with filling in-between each layer. If the shortbread is white, then jam is used – often rhubarb jam (pages 510–11) – and if it is brown from cocoa, a plain Buttercream (page 534) is common. *Randalín* means, 'the striped one', and refers to the striped appearance of the cake when it is cut.

Some *randalín* recipes indicate that the dough should be rolled out, much like a conventional shortcrust pastry (basic pie dough), whilst others are much less firm and need to be spread out with a spatula directly onto a sheet of baking (parchment) paper. I have included a recipe for each version. To make chocolate layer cake, add 2 tablespoons of cocoa powder to either shortbread recipe.

Some recipes, especially older ones, are leavened with baker's ammonia, which will give an even shorter texture than baking powder, but which might also add a slight scent of nightclub urinal if overdosed.

Regardless of which filling you decide to use, you will need about 300 ml/10½ fl oz (1¼ cups) of it for the amount of shortbread in the recipes below.

SPREAD ONTO BAKING PAPER (VERSION 1)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Standing time: 3 hours
Makes: 1 x 4-layer cake, 10 slices

100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, soft
125 g/4½ oz (½ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
2 eggs
360 g/12¾ oz (3 cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) cold milk
300 g/10½ oz (1¼ cups) jam (pages 510–11)

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Combine the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat until white and fluffy. Decrease the speed and add the eggs, one at a time. Whisk at medium speed between each addition, until fully incorporated.

Sift the flour and baking powder together into the bowl and mix until the flour is fully incorporated, but not any longer. Finally, add the milk and whisk again until fully incorporated but not longer.

Spread the batter onto the prepared baking sheets, forming rectangles of 30 x 40 cm/12 x 16 inches.

Bake for about 10 minutes, or until lightly golden. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

Cut each large rectangle in half lengthways, to make 4 small rectangles of 15 x 40 cm/6 x 16 inches. Spread 3 of the shortbread layers with a thick layer of jam – it shouldn't be much thinner than the pastry itself – then stack them on top of each other. Top with the final shortbread layer. Cover the cake with clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave for a few hours. Before serving, use a sharp serrated knife to trim the edges to neaten them and to reveal the striped layers.

ROLLED OUT (VERSION 2)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Resting time: 1 hour
Standing time: 3 hours
Makes: 1 x 4-layer cake, 10 slices

225 g/8 oz (2 sticks) butter, soft
220 g/7¾ oz (1 cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
2 eggs
450 g/1 lb (3¾ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
1 teaspoon baking powder
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) cold milk
300 g/10½ oz (1¼ cups) jam (pages 510–11)

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Combine the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat until white and fluffy. Decrease the speed and add the eggs, one at a time. Whisk at medium speed between each addition, until fully incorporated.

Sift the flour and baking powder together into the bowl and mix until the flour is fully incorporated, but not any longer. Finally, add the milk and whisk in briefly.

Shape the dough into a ball and wrap tightly with clingfilm (plastic wrap) before resting in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour.

Place the dough on a lightly floured work counter and divide it into either 2 or 4 pieces. You'll need 2 for a rectangular cake and 4 if you are making a round one.

For the rectangular version, roll the 2 pieces out into rectangles of about 30 x 40 cm/12 x 16 inches and transfer to the prepared baking sheets. For a round cake, roll the 4 pieces out to 20 cm/8 inch circles.

Bake for 15–30 minutes, or until lightly golden. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

For a rectangular cake, cut each large rectangle in half lengthways, to make 4 small rectangles of 15 x 40 cm/6 x 16 inches.

Whether rectangular or round, spread 3 of the shortbread layers with a thick layer of jam – it shouldn't be much thinner than the pastry itself – then stack them on top of each other. Top with the final shortbread layer. Cover the cake with clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave for a few hours.

For a rectangular cake, before serving, use a sharp serrated knife to trim the edges to neaten them and to reveal the striped layers.

ICELANDIC LAYER CAKE WITH PRUNE JAM

Vinarterta (Iceland)

This is another version of Icelandic Layer Cake (page 450), which uses white shortbread and Prune Compote (page 524). This version has become very popular among North Americans with Icelandic roots and the American recipes often use more layers than are seen in Iceland – 6–8 sheets of cake are not uncommon. The North American versions are also sometimes glazed with icing (frosting).

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Soaking time: a few hours
Resting time: 3 hours
Makes: 10 pieces

250 g/9 oz (2¼ sticks) butter, at room temperature
250 g/9 oz (1¼ cups) sugar
2 eggs
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (4 cups plus 2 tablespoons) plain (all-purpose) flour, plus extra for dusting
1½ teaspoon baker's ammonia
½ teaspoon baking powder
pinch of ground cardamom

For the prune jam
1 kg/2¼ lb prunes, pitted and soaked in water for a few hours
650 g/1 lb 7 oz (3¼ cups) sugar

Start by making the prune jam. Put the prunes into a pan with a little bit of water and bring to the boil over a medium heat. Add the sugar and simmer over a low heat for 30 minutes. Leave the jam to cool down completely before spreading it on the cake.

Place the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat until pale and fluffy. Lower the speed and add the eggs, one by one, making sure each is fully incorporated before you add the next. Sift the flour, baker's ammonia and baking powder into the bowl, add the cardamom and beat until combined. Wrap the dough in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave in the refrigerator for about 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and line 3 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work counter and divide it into 5 equal pieces. Roll out each piece to 1 cm/½ inch thickness and about the same size rectangular shape.

Place the layers on the prepared baking sheets and bake for about 10 minutes, or until golden in colour. Remove from the oven and leave the layers to cool down before you add the filling.

Place one layer on a cake dish and spread the prune jam on top. Add another layer and more jam, and so on. Don't put any jam on the top layer. Cover the cake with clingfilm and leave it in the refrigerator for 2 hours before serving.

Trim the edges of the cake with a sharp knife to neaten them and to reveal the striped layers before serving.

ALMOND AND BUTTERCREAM TORTE

Suksesskake / Kake med gul grem (Norway)
Zuleikatårta (Sweden)

This cake is common in both Sweden and Norway, but it's definitely more cherished these days in Norway. Made up of a sort of chewy, cakey almond meringue coated in a thick layer of very eggy buttercream, it is sometimes sprinkled with flaked almonds and sometimes not. In my opinion it's always better eaten the day after it was baked. Especially in Sweden, but sometimes also in Norway, you see this cake described as supposedly having a layer of cream between two cut layers of cake, or cream on top of the cake and underneath the buttercream. This is not right, and, at least the way I see it, not an evolution that is wanted.

Preparation and cooking time: 1¼ hours
Makes: 12 pieces

butter, to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
3 egg whites
100 g/3½ oz (1 cup) ground almonds
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar
50 g/2 oz (¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons) peeled and flaked almonds, to decorate

For the buttercream
3 egg yolks
80 g/3 oz (¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) cream
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Whisk the egg whites in a bowl to form stiff peaks. Mix the ground almonds with the sugar in a bowl and then carefully fold the mixture into the stiff egg whites.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan, smooth the surface and bake for about 25 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70. Remove the cake from the pan and leave it to cool.

To make the buttercream, mix all the ingredients together in a small pan and simmer over a low heat while stirring, until the cream thickens. Leave the cream to cool down a little before you pour it over the cake. Decorate the top with flaked almonds. Keep the cake in the refrigerator until serving. It tastes best cold.

For image see page 467

MERINGUE LAYER CAKE

Marengslagkage (Faroe Islands)
Marengslagkage (Denmark)
Marängtårta (Sweden)

This layer cake is made up from 3–4 discs of meringue, each 25–30 cm/10–12 inches in diameter, stacked on top of each other with lightly sweetened, whipped cream and fresh berries or jam (pages 510–11), in between and also on the top layer to decorate. Sometimes the cake is also drizzled with Chocolate Sauce (page 534) and/or has chocolate grated over it.

Preparation time: 3 hours
Makes: 8 pieces

160 g/5½ oz egg whites
200 g/7 oz (1 cup) sugar

Preheat the oven to 110°C/225°F/Gas Mark ½. Line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Place the egg whites in the spotlessly clean, dry bowl of a stand mixer (or a large stainless steel mixing bowl) and start whisking them slowly until they begin to foam. Add the sugar, little by little, making sure you leave enough time between each addition for the sugar crystals to dissolve completely. For meringue perfection, it is important not to hurry too much, or to whisk too quickly, or to add the sugar too fast, as this will result in more of a runny fluff, with less of the velvety, brilliant, shiny quality that really good meringue has.

After you have added about half of the sugar – lets say it takes you about 5 minutes – you can start whisking at a faster speed and adding the sugar at a slightly faster pace. When all the sugar has been added, lower the speed again and keep whisking the meringue until all the sugar crystals have dissolved and the meringue looks like fresh white paint, in both brilliance and shine. It should be very stiff.

Spread or pipe the meringue onto the baking (parchment) paper to create three or four 25–30 cm/10–12 inch discs. The easiest way to do this is to draw a perfect round circle on an extra piece of paper. Place this underneath the parchment as you pipe, to act as a template.

Bake the meringue discs for 45 minutes. Turn off the oven and leave the meringues in there with the oven door slightly open. Allow them to cool and dry completely before you remove them from the paper. It will take a couple of hours, depending on how humid your climate is.

To assemble, spread the discs of meringue with whipped cream and your choice of berries or jam. Sit them on top of each other and transfer carefully to a serving platter. Finally, top with more berries and sprinkle with grated chocolate or chocolate sauce, if you want to.

STRAWBERRY LAYER CAKE

Jordgubbsgräddtårta (Sweden)

This cake, which for many Swedes is an integral part of their midsummer meal, is simple to make. A round sponge cake is cut into two or more layers, fillings like jam (pages 510–11) or fresh berries stirred with sugar, crushed banana, and/or Vanilla Custard / Pastry Cream (page 533) are spread on each layer before the cake is assembled, covered with whipped cream and decorated with plenty of whole strawberries.

It is integral for the success of the cake to have a really tasty sponge. I like one that is a bit heavier than those commonly used for layer cakes. I also prefer the simplest possible version: two layers of sponge with one layer of strawberries stirred with sugar in between. Use plenty of berries so that their juices can further moisten the cake itself.

Preparation and cooking time: 1¼ hours
Macerating time: 10 minutes
Makes: 8 pieces

250 g/9 oz (2¼ sticks) butter, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) milk
4 eggs
350 g/12 oz (1¾ cups) sugar
320 g/11¼ oz (2½ cups plus 2 tablespoons) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder

For the filling
500 g/1 lb 2 oz strawberries
sugar, to taste
500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 1 tablespoon) cream

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Combine the butter and milk in a small pan and heat until the butter has melted. Leave to cool to room temperature.

Whisk the eggs with the sugar in a bowl until light and fluffy. Add the butter and milk mixture and mix in thoroughly. Sift the dry ingredients into the bowl and whisk in gently.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan, smooth the surface and bake for about 40 minutes, or until cooked through. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see page 69–70. Leave the cake in the pan to cool.

To prepare the filling, coarsely chop the strawberries, reserving about 20 nice ones for the top of the cake. Stir them with some sugar in a bowl and leave to macerate for about 10 minutes, or until the sugar has dissolved.

Meanwhile, whip the cream to soft peaks in a bowl.

Slice the cold sponge cake in half horizontally with a long serrated knife. Spoon the sugared strawberries onto one half of the sponge cake. Place the other half of the sponge cake carefully on top. Spread an even layer of whipped cream over the sides and top of the cake and decorate with the reserved whole strawberries.

FINNISH FUDGE LAYER CAKE

Kinuskikakku (Finland)
Tjinuskitårta (Sweden)

Kinuski is the name of an iconic milk-based Finnish caramel fudge sauce of Russian origin. Layers of sponge cake are filled with Quark and raspberry jam before the whole cake is covered in a thick layer of the fudge caramel sauce and the edges of the cake coated with whipped cream. *Kinuskikakku* is popular for birthdays and other celebrations.

Preparation time: 45 minutes
Makes: 8 pieces

1 plain sponge cake (choose one of the recipes on pages 404–5)

For the filling
250 g/9 oz (1 cup) Quark
2 tablespoons sugar
2 teaspoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) cream, whipped to soft peaks
300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) raspberry jam (pages 510–11)

For the topping
1 quantity Finnish Fudge / Caramel Sauce (page 534)
400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) cream, whipped to soft peaks

Place the Quark, sugar and vanilla sugar in a bowl and stir briskly with a whisk. Add the cream and fold it into the Quark mixture. The texture should be smooth but fluffy.

Cut the cake into 3 horizontal layers with a long serrated knife and place the first layer on a serving platter. Spread it with half of the raspberry jam and then half of the Quark cream. Place the middle layer of cake on top of the Quark and add another layer of raspberry jam, then add one more layer of Quark cream before placing the final layer of cake on top. Press the top layer down a little to make sure it all sticks together well.

Once the cake is assembled, spread the top and sides with the fudge sauce and finish by piping the whipped cream around the sides of the cake using a piping (pastry) bag fitted with a star nozzle.

ROLLED TORTE / ROULADE

Rullukaka (Faroe Islands)
Rullekake (Norway)
Kääretorttu (Finland)
Roulade (Denmark)
Rulltårta (Sweden)

This is a versatile cake that can be filled with plain Buttercream (page 534), Chocolate Buttercream (page 534) or your favourite jam (pages 510–11). I have even seen a couple of recipes from the Faroe Islands where it is filled with Prune Compote (page 524) or with mashed banana. You can also flavour the cake itself with grated lemon zest or Vanilla Sugar (page 536) if you want.

Preparation and cooking time: 35 minutes
Makes: 8 pieces

3 eggs
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar, plus extra for sprinkling
pinch of salt
55 ml/1¾ fl oz (¼ cup) milk
130 g/4½ oz (1 cup plus 1 tablespoon) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder

Preheat the oven to 225°C/435°F/Gas Mark 7 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Whisk the eggs with the sugar in a bowl until pale and fluffy, then add the salt and milk. Sift in the flour and baking powder and stir until combined.

Spread the mixture out on the prepared baking sheet to form a neat 30 x 40-cm/12 x 16-inch rectangle. Smooth the surface and bake for 5–7 minutes, or until the surface is golden. Be careful that it doesn't burn. The cake can look a little weird while baking, going all bubbly and uneven, but it will flatten out when it is taken out of the oven.

While the cake is baking, place a fresh sheet of baking paper on the work counter and sprinkle it with a generous amount of sugar; it is important that the whole surface of the paper is evenly covered.

When the cake comes out of the oven, give it 10 seconds or so for any bubbles to subside before turning it out onto the bed of sugar. Leave it for 2 minutes, then lightly brush the paper that is stuck to the bottom of the cake (now on top) with some cold water and cover with a clean, damp dish towel. When the cake is just cool, remove the dish towel and carefully peel the paper away from the cake.

Spread the cold cake with your choice of filling and roll it up. I think that the easiest way to do this is to lift the sugared paper it is resting on upwards with one hand, while at the same time using the other hand to ensure an even roll. Arrange the torte on a serving platter so the seam is underneath and leave it for a couple of minutes to firm up before slicing.

For image see page 457

HAZELNUT AND MANDARIN ROLLED TORTE / BUDAPEST ROLL

Budapestrulle / Budapeststubbe (Sweden)

This torte was invented in the southern Swedish town of Vetlanda during the first half of the twentieth century, by pastry chef Ingvar Strid. It is one of the more iconic and widespread recipes that you find in classic-style Swedish pastry shops and it is said that it was somehow inspired by the Austrian/Hungarian Esterházy Torte. I myself fail to see the resemblance, or any other link, apart from in the name and its reference to the Hungarian capital. Originally decorated with canned mandarin segments, these days the 'Budapest roll' can be served with many other types of fruit and berries.

The *Budapestrulle* doesn't contain any flour and most old recipes use potato starch. Quite a few more recent versions include some instant flan or custard powder and even though this feels a bit strange, I tend to like these recipes better.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Serves: 10

6 egg whites
200 g/7 oz (1 cup) sugar
100 g/3½ oz (⅔ cup) hazelnuts
  (not blanched), finely chopped
50 g/2 oz (3 tablespoons) instant flan
  or custard powder
400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) cream
300–400 g/11–14 oz canned mandarin
  segments, drained
100 g/3½ oz dark (semisweet) chocolate
  (optional)

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Place the egg whites in the spotlessly clean and dry bowl of a stand mixer and whisk at medium speed until they begin to foam and thicken. Add the sugar, little by little, making sure you leave enough time between each addition for the sugar crystals to dissolve completely. After you have added about half of the sugar you can start whisking at a faster speed and adding the sugar at a slightly faster pace. When all the sugar has been added, lower the speed again and keep whisking the meringue slowly until all the sugar crystals have dissolved and you have a stiff meringue. Add the chopped hazelnuts and the flan powder together to the meringue and stir until just incorporated.

Spread the meringue out on the prepared baking sheet to form a neat 30 x 40 cm/12 x 16 inch rectangle. Bake for 15–20 minutes.

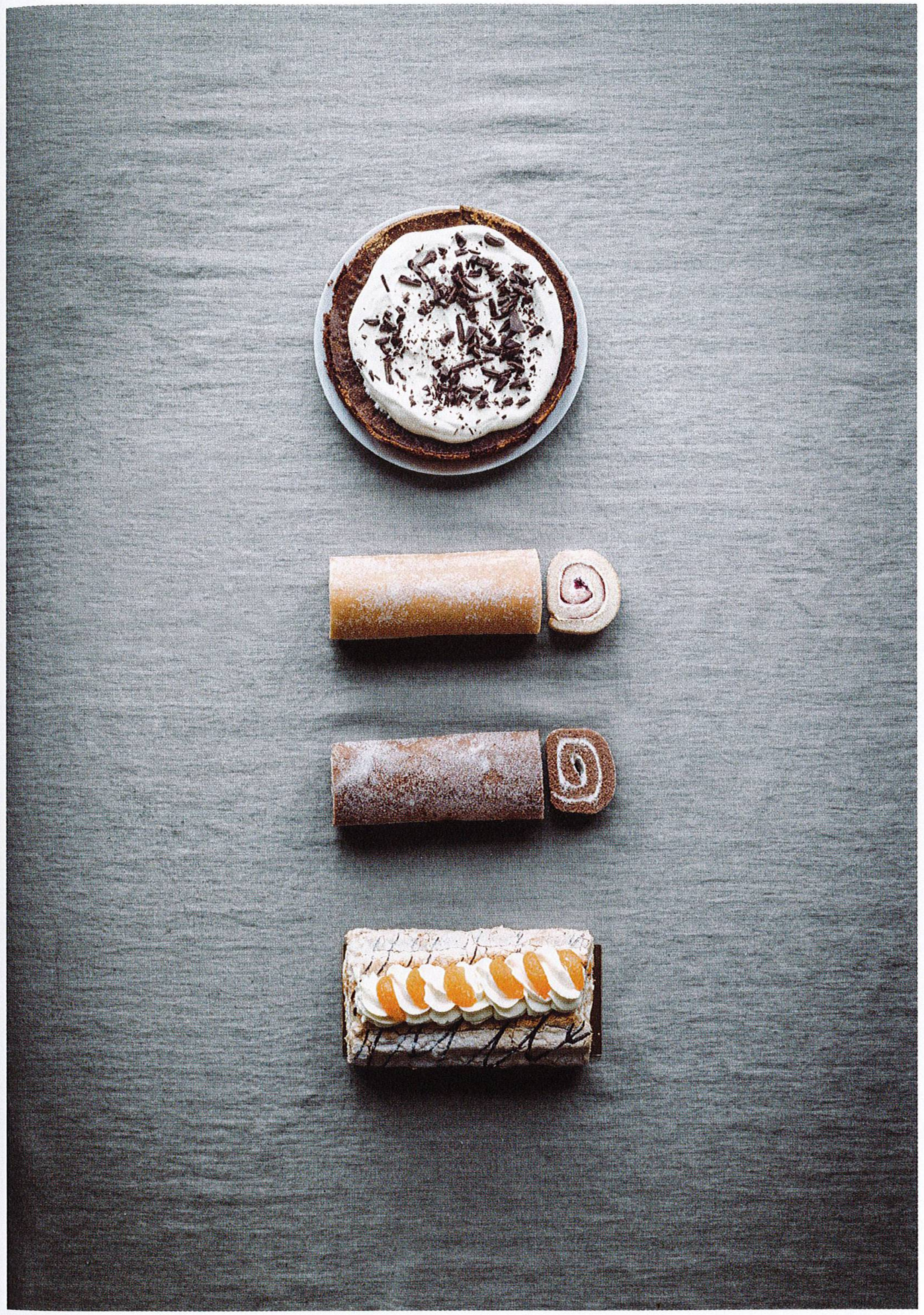
While the meringue is baking, place a fresh sheet of baking paper on the work counter. When the meringue comes out of the oven, turn it onto the baking paper and carefully peel away the paper that is stuck to the bottom of the meringue (now on top). Leave on the counter to cool completely.

Whip the cream in a bowl to soft peaks and spread it evenly over the meringue, reserving some for decoration. Scatter most of the mandarin segments on top of the cream, but keep some for decoration. Roll up the meringue carefully, then place on a serving platter so the seam is underneath and leave it for 10 minutes or so to firm up.

Decorate the rolled torte in a 1950s-pastry-shop way with the reserved whipped cream, mandarin segments and melted dark (semisweet) chocolate piped from a disposable piping (pastry) bag in a pattern of your liking, if you wish.

If you are using chocolate to decorate the torte, follow the instructions for melting chocolate on page 82. Transfer the melted chocolate to a piping bag and pipe onto the torte.

For image see page opposite



Top to bottom: Rye Bread Layer Cake from Jylland (page 461); Rolled Torte / Roulade (page 455); Chocolate Rolled Torte / Roulade (page 458); Hazelnut and Mandarin Rolled Torte / Budapest Roll (page 456)

CHOCOLATE ROLLED TORTE / ROULADE

Unelmatorttu (Finland)
Chokolade roulade (Denmark)
Chokladrulltårta med smörkräm /
Drömtårta (Sweden)

Some people make rolled tortes like this with a mix of potato starch and weak (soft) wheat flour to make it more pliable for the rolling. I don't like the texture that brings, but if you want, you can just substitute half of the wheat flour with potato starch – or even all of it, if you want to make the torte gluten free.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Makes: 8 pieces

3 eggs
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar, plus extra
  for sprinkling
pinch of salt
60 g/2¼ oz (½ cup) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 tablespoons cocoa powder
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 quantity Buttercream (page 534)

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Whisk the eggs with the sugar in a bowl until pale and fluffy, then add the salt. Sift the flour, cocoa powder and baking powder into the bowl and stir until fully combined.

Spread the mixture out on the prepared baking sheet to form a neat 30 x 40-cm/12 x 16-inch rectangle. Smooth the surface and bake for 7–10 minutes, or until the surface is golden. Be careful that it doesn't burn. The cake can look a little weird while baking, going all bubbly and uneven, but it will flatten out when it is taken out of the oven.

While the cake is baking, place a fresh sheet of baking (parchment) paper on the work counter and sprinkle it with a generous amount of sugar; it is important that the whole surface of the paper is evenly covered.

When the cake comes out of the oven, give it about 10 seconds or so for any bubbles to subside before turning it out onto the bed of sugar. Leave it for 2 minutes, then lightly brush the paper that is stuck to the bottom of the cake (now on top) with some cold water and cover with a clean, damp dish towel.

When the cake is just cool, remove the dish towel and carefully peel the paper away from the cake.

Spread the buttercream onto the cold cake and roll it up. I think that the easiest way to do this is to lift the sugared paper it is resting on upwards with one hand, while at the same time using the other hand to ensure an even roll. Arrange the torte on a serving platter so the seam is underneath and leave it for a couple of minutes to firm up before slicing.

For image see page 457

FAROESE BROWN ROLLED TORTE / ROULADE

Brun rullukaku (Faroe Islands)

Preparation and cooking time: 35 minutes
Makes: 8 pieces

3 eggs
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) brown sugar, plus
  extra for sprinkling
pinch of salt
55 ml/1¾ fl oz (¼ cup) milk
130 g/4½ oz (1 cup plus 1 tablespoon) weak
  (soft) wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon finely ground cardamom seeds

For the filling
150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons)
  butter, at room temperature
150 g/5 oz (1¼ cups) icing (confectioners')
  sugar
1 egg yolk

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Whisk the eggs with the sugar in a bowl until pale and fluffy, then add the salt and the milk. Sift the flour, baking powder and spices straight into the bowl and stir until fully combined.

Spread the mixture out on the prepared baking sheet to form a neat 30 x 40-cm/12 x 16-inch rectangle. Bake for 5–7 minutes, or until the surface is golden. Be careful that it doesn't burn. The cake can look a little weird while baking, going all bubbly and uneven, but it will flatten out when it is taken out of the oven.

While the cake is baking, place a fresh sheet of baking paper on the work counter and sprinkle it generously with sugar; it is important that the surface of the paper is evenly covered.

When the cake comes out of the oven, give it 10 seconds or so for any bubbles to subside before turning it out onto the bed of sugar. Leave it for 2 minutes, then lightly brush the parchment which is stuck to the bottom of the cake (now on top) with some cold water and cover with a clean, damp dish towel. When the cake is just cool, remove the dish towel and carefully peel the paper away from the cake.

To make the filling, beat the butter and icing (confectioners') sugar in a small bowl. Add the egg yolk and whisk together.

Spread the cold cake with the filling and roll it up. I think that the easiest way to do this is to lift the sugared paper it is resting on upwards with one hand, while at the same time using the other hand to ensure an even roll. Arrange the roulade on a serving platter so the seam is underneath and then leave it for a couple of minutes to firm up before slicing.

ROLLED CAKE PASTRIES

Rulltårtsbakelser (Sweden)

This is a real childhood favourite of mine. I remember going into some village café up north in Sweden as a child – I was probably around five years old – and glancing over the untouched 1950s decor of the room (pink velvet sofas I remember), my eyes stopping at the glass counter where chunks of cake rolls where placed upright like little tree stumps, generously topped with cream and berries. I remember the smell of the place, the fact that it was entirely silent except for an old clock on the wall. I remember the taste and the texture of the cake when I ate it: layers of rolled-up cake and buttercream, little clouds of cream and tart raspberries.

Serve the pastries as a dessert or *fika* (pages 44–9).

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 12 pastries

1 quantity of the rolled torte/roulade recipe
  of your choice (pages 455–8)

To decorate
300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) cream, whipped
200 g/7 oz (1⅔ cups) berries or fruits, such
  as strawberries, raspberries, blueberries
  or grapes
flaked almonds

Make the rolled cake according to the recipe. Leave it to cool down in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes before cutting into 12 slices.

Spoon the whipped cream into a piping (pastry) bag and use it to decorate the slices of rolled cake, then decorate with the berries or fruit and sprinkle some flaked almonds on top.

LEMON MOON CAKE

Citronmåne (Denmark)

This is a very common Danish cake, flavoured with lemon and glazed with a yellow icing to look like a full moon. Most recipes today are simply a glazed lemon sponge cake, whereas the more traditional, like the one below, are baked with an addition of marzipan.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Makes: 10 pieces

For the first batter
250 g/9 oz (2¼ sticks) butter, at room
  temperature, plus extra to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
120 g/4 oz (1 cup) icing (confectioners')
  sugar
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar
2 teaspoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
3 eggs, plus 3 egg yolks
100 g/3½ oz (¾ cup plus 2 teaspoons) weak
  (soft) wheat flour
60 g/2¼ oz (½ cup) cornflour (cornstarch)
zest and juice of 1 lemon

For the second batter
125 g/4½ oz Marzipan (page 532), grated
90 g/3¼ oz (⅓ cup plus 1½ tablespoons)
  sugar
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter, at room
  temperature
2 eggs

For the icing
150 g/5 oz (1¼ cups) icing (confectioners')
  sugar
juice from ½ lemon
zest of 1 lemon

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

To make the first batter, place the butter, icing (confectioners') sugar, raw sugar and vanilla sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat at medium speed until pale and fluffy. Add the eggs and the egg yolks, one by one, while you continue beating at a lower speed until just combined. Sift the dry ingredients together into the bowl and add the lemon zest and juice. Stir gently until combined.

Make the second batter by mixing all of the ingredients together in a bowl, adding the eggs last, one by one, making sure each is fully incorporated before you add the next. Add the second batter to the first, and fold it in. Mix until almost combined.

Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan, smooth the surface and bake for about 45 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70. Leave the cake to cool completely before icing.

Make the icing by mixing the icing (confectioners') sugar with the lemon juice until white and soft. Spread the icing over the cooled cake and zest the lemon directly on top.

JELLIED FRUIT CAKE

Frukttårta i gelé (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 3 hours
Makes: 12 pieces

1 quantity Swedish Sponge Cake (page 404)
  or Layer Cake Sponge (page 446)

For the first filling
150–200 ml/5–7 fl oz (½–¾ cup) jam of your
  choice, such as raspberry or strawberry
  (pages 510–11)

For the second filling
1 quantity Vanilla Custard (page 532)

To decorate
75 g/2¾ oz (½ cup plus 2 tablespoons)
  hazelnuts, chopped and roasted
200–300 g/7–11 oz fresh or canned fruits
  and berries of your choice, cut into nice
  looking pieces. Use grapes, strawberries,
  raspberries, blueberries or canned
  pineapple, if liked but don't use fruits
  that are too hard

For the jelly
12 g/⅓ oz gelatine (pages 76–8)
4 tablespoons sugar
2 ml/0.07 fl oz (½ teaspoon) citric acid

Follow the instructions on page 404 or page 446 to make the sponge or layer cake. Leave the cake to cool completely before you slice it into 3 horizontal layers with a long serrated knife.

Follow the instructions on page 532 to make the vanilla custard and leave it to cool down.

Prepare the jelly by soaking the gelatine in a bowl of cold water. Heat 250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) water in a pan over a medium heat. Add the sugar and citric acid, then drain the gelatine and add to the hot water. Stir until the gelatine has dissolved, then leave to cool while you assemble the cake.

Place one layer of the sponge on a cake dish. Spread two thirds of the custard onto the sponge. Add the second layer and spread the jam on top of that. Finish by adding the third layer and the rest of the vanilla custard on top and around the edges of the cake. Cover the edges with the roasted hazelnuts and decorate the top of the cake with the fruits. Pour the thick jelly over the fruits and then leave the cake in the refrigerator until the jelly has set completely.

RYE BREAD LAYER CAKE FROM JYLLAND

Sønderjysk rugbrødslagkage (Denmark)

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Makes: 10 pieces

butter, to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
6 eggs, separated
150 g/5 oz (¾ cup) sugar
200 g/7 oz dark rye bread without seeds, grated
1 tablespoon potato starch
2 tablespoons cocoa powder
2 teaspoons baking powder
50 g/2 oz dark (semisweet) chocolate,
  finely chopped, to decorate

For the filling
500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons)
  cream, whipped
200 g/7 oz (¾ cup) blackcurrant jam (or
  another jam, pages 510–11)

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch cake pan and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Place the egg yolks and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat until pale and fluffy. Mix the grated rye bread, flour, cocoa and baking powder together in a separate bowl, then add them to the egg and sugar mixture and stir until just combined.

Whisk the egg whites in a bowl to form stiff peaks, then carefully fold them into the batter. Don't stir too much, as you want the batter to be fluffy.

Pour the batter into the prepared cake pan, smooth the surface and bake for about 50 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70. Leave the cake to cool completely.

Slice the cooled cake into 2 horizontal layers with a long serrated knife. Place the bottom cake layer on a cake dish and spread with jam and then half of the whipped cream. Place the second layer on top and spread with the rest of the cream. Decorate the cake with chopped dark chocolate.

For image see page 457

CHOCOLATE COOKIE CAKE

Hjalskaka (Faroe Islands)
Radiokaka (Sweden)

I remember both eating and making this cake as a kid. There is something quite special about the way the coconut fat melts at a low temperature, and in a different way to anything else, when you eat it. The cake is made from cocoa powder, which has, in the manufacturing process, had all the cocoa fat removed. That fat is then substituted with a totally different fat. It's a bit strange, but in a way, it is a sort of reconstructed chocolate.

In Swedish it is called *radiokaka*, or 'radio cake'. There are different stories as to why, but I believe it is simply because when you slice it, it sort of looks like an old-fashioned radio. Some people like to scatter multi-coloured sprinkles over the top, but I have never been a huge fan of that.

Use plain sweet cookies like Rich Tea or Marie.

Preparation and setting time: 1½ hours
Makes: 1 loaf cake

250 g/9 oz coconut fat (pressed
coconut oil)
2 eggs
250 g/9 oz (2 cups) icing (confectioners')
sugar
50 g/2 oz (½ cup plus 1 tablespoon)
cocoa powder
pinch of salt
1 packet of sweet cookies or crackers

Line a 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan with baking (parchment) paper.

Melt the coconut fat (pressed coconut oil) carefully in a pan over low heat, then let it cool to just above room temperature.

Beat the eggs with the sugar until pale and fluffy. Sift over the cocoa powder and fold it in. Drizzle in the coconut fat, a little at a time, stirring continuously. Make sure you fully incorporate each addition before you add more; it's a bit like making a mayonnaise.

Spoon a layer of cocoa mixture into the prepared loaf pan, then arrange a layer of cookies or crackers on top. Continue layering the cocoa mixture with biscuits until you run out. Refrigerate until the cake has completely set.

To serve, turn the cake out of the pan and cut into slices with a sharp serrated knife.

ALMOND WREATH CAKE

Kransekake (Norway)
Kransekage (Denmark)

A festive pastry served at celebrations like weddings, baptisms, Christmas and New Year's Eve. The cake consists of a number of rings baked from ground almonds, sugar and egg whites, stacked on top of each other, with each new layer being a slightly smaller diameter than the previous one. Each layer is decorated with icing before the next is put in place, the icing acting like a sort of glue. Some people want their almond wreath cake crisper and therefore cook it for longer, while most people that I have spoken to prefer it to be firm to the touch, but soft and a bit chewy in the middle.

To serve the cake, take individual rings out of the stack and break or cut them into suitable pieces. I have been told that the proper way of doing this is to always remove the bottom ring first, so that the top part of the cake remains intact and pretty for as long as possible. This is tricky and I think that your genome might have to be of Danish or Norwegian descent for you to have the skills to do this without the whole thing toppling over. Sometimes a bottle of wine or some other surprise is hidden inside the cake.

Most Danish recipes are based on ready-made marzipan whilst most Norwegian recipes are based on almonds, which are blanched, dried and ground before being mixed with sugar and egg whites. The two methods produce the same result since marzipan itself is made from ground almonds and sugar. I think that this cultural difference in preparation, which is still evident in today's recipes, comes from the fact that in Denmark, marzipan has been more readily available thanks to Odense Marzipan, a big and old manufacturer of almond-based sweets.

The only clear benefit and difference that I can see in making the marzipan yourself is that you can decide whether or not to blanch the almonds and you can vary the degree to which the almonds are ground. To leave some or all of the skins on will give a darker cake and grinding the almonds less finely will give a coarser texture.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Serves: 10

250 g/9 oz (1¼ cups) sugar
2 egg whites
500 g/1 lb 2 oz Marzipan (page 532), grated
on the coarse side of a box grater
pinch of salt
1 quantity White Icing (page 530)

Mix the sugar with the egg whites in a bowl until light and fluffy.

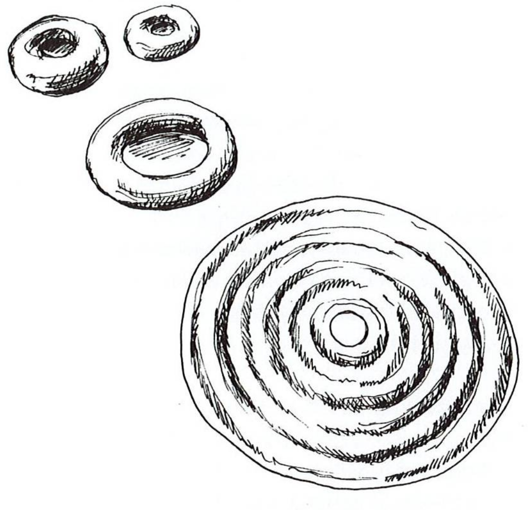
Combine all the ingredients, except the icing, in a large mixing bowl and work them together with a sturdy whisk or wooden spoon until you have a smooth batter.

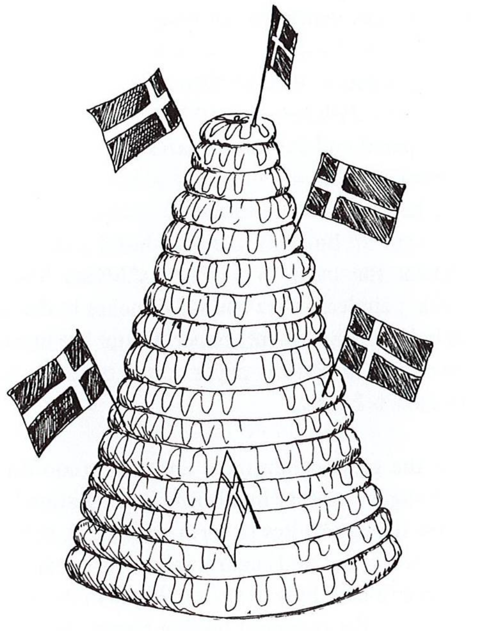
Draw the circles you need onto baking (parchment) paper, and then place the paper on a baking sheet. Measure each circle with a ruler (see illustration on page 87).

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark7.

Roll the batter into logs of varying lengths, according to your measurements and then shape each log into rings and fit them into the circles you have drawn out on the paper. Alternatively you can use a special *kransekage* mould (see illustration right), which gives you more precise rings and allows you to skip the measuring and drawing out of circles on paper.

Bake the rings until pale gold. Leave to cool for a while on a wire rack before piping the icing onto the rings and layering them up into a cone shape.





SCHWARZWALD CAKE

Schwarzwaldtårta (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Makes: 12 pieces

butter, to grease
130 g/4½ oz (1 cup) roasted hazelnuts, ground
220 g/7¾ oz (1¾ cups plus 2 tablespoons) icing (confectioners') sugar
4 egg whites

For the filling
650 ml/22 fl oz (2½ cups plus 3 tablespoons) cream, whipped
70 g/2½ oz (½ cup) hazelnuts, ground
2 teaspoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536)

To decorate
200 g/7 oz dark (semisweet) chocolate, tempered and cut into squares (pages 78–83)
2 tablespoons cocoa powder

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Mark 3 circles, 20–22 cm/8–8½ inches in diameter on baking (parchment) paper. Butter the inside of the circles so that the paper comes off easily when the cake is baked.

Mix the ground hazelnuts and icing (confectioners') sugar together in a bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk the egg whites to form stiff peaks, then add them to the nut and sugar mixture. Stir gently until just combined. Spread the meringue in the marked circles on the prepared baking paper, smooth the surfaces and bake for 10 minutes. Make sure that the meringue is hard. If not, bake for a few minutes. Leave to cool down completely.

Line a baking sheet with baking paper. Melt 150 g/5 oz of the chocolate for the decoration by following the instructions on page 82. Spread the melted chocolate onto the lined baking sheet and place in the refrigerator to harden. Remove it after a few minutes and cut into 4-cm/1½-inch squares. Put the baking sheet back in the refrigerator.

Make the filling by mixing half of the whipped cream with the ground hazelnuts and vanilla sugar in a bowl. Place one of the meringue layers on a cake dish and cover with half of the filling. Add the second layer and the rest of the filling, then the third meringue layer. Cover the top and edges of the cake with some of the remaining whipped cream. Put the rest of the cream into a piping (pastry) bag and decorate the top of the cake.

Place the chocolate squares on and around the sides of the cake, pressing them into the whipped cream. Grate any remaining chocolate over the cake and finish by sifting the cocoa powder over the whole cake.

FROZEN DAIM CAKE

Daimtårta (Sweden)

This is an example of evolution going backwards. Usually big food industry tries to make what people already made in their home. This cake however is a 1980s industry invention that could, and can still be, bought frozen in supermarkets, but which people have started developing their own recipes for. Because it hasn't been around for very long, there is not much consensus as to what the recipes should look like and most of them are very different from the industrial original. The recipe below, however, is, I think, a pretty good representation of what most people would expect when you say *daimtårta*.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Freezing time: at least 4 hours
Makes: 12 pieces

butter, to grease
breadcrumbs, to coat
4 egg whites
90 g/3¼ oz (⅓ cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
100 g/3½ oz (¾ cup) almonds, peeled and grated or ground almonds
50 g/2 oz Daim chocolate (or another milk chocolate that you like, if you can't find Daim), chopped, to decorate

For the filling
4 egg yolks
90 g/3¼ oz (¾ cup) icing (confectioners') sugar
500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) cream, whipped
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
100 g/3½ oz Daim chocolate (or another milk chocolate that you like, if you can't find Daim), chopped

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Line the bottom of a 20-cm/8-inch cake pan with baking (parchment) paper. Butter the sides and coat with breadcrumbs. For information on how to prepare a cake pan, see pages 66–9.

Whisk the egg whites in a bowl to form really stiff peaks. Add the sugar and almonds and stir in carefully. Spread the mixture in the prepared cake pan and bake for 30 minutes. Leave the almond meringue to cool down completely in the pan.

Make the filling by whisking the egg yolks and icing (confectioners') sugar together in a bowl until fluffy. Add the whipped cream, vanilla sugar and the 100 g/3½ oz chopped chocolate and stir gently until combined. You want the mixture to remain fluffy.

Pour the filling into the cake pan on top of the meringue and freeze for at least 4 hours. Remove from the freezer 10 minutes before serving and sprinkle the 50 g/2 oz chopped chocolate on top.

WATER PASTRIES (ECLAIRS)

Vannbakkels (Norway)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Resting time: 20 minutes
Makes: 12 pastries

145 g/4¾ oz (1¼ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour
110 g/3¾ oz (7½ tablespoons) butter
125 ml/4 fl oz (½ cup) milk
½ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon sugar
4 eggs
1 quantity Vanilla Custard (page 532)

Measure the flour into a bowl and place it close to the stove.

Melt the butter in a pan over a medium heat and add the milk, 125 ml/4 fl oz (½ cup) water, the salt and sugar. Bring to the boil, then add the flour while stirring with a wooden spoon for 3–4 minutes.

Pour the batter into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat at medium speed while adding the eggs, one by one, making sure each is fully incorporated before you add the next. Fill a piping (pastry) bag with the batter and leave in the refrigerator for 20 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

Use the piping bag to pipe 12–15 balls of batter on the prepared baking sheet. Bake for about 4 minutes, then lower the temperature to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4 and bake for another 4 minutes, or until golden. Remove from the oven and transfer the baking paper with the pastries from the hot baking sheet to the work counter. Leave the pastries to cool completely.

Once cool, make a small hole in the bottom of each pastry. Spoon the cooled vanilla custard into a piping bag fitted with a nozzle and fill the holes with the custard.

SWEDISH ALMOND MERINGUE TORTE

Brittatårta / Pinocchiotårta (Sweden)

My grandmother used to make this torte quite often for birthdays and other torte-friendly occasions; I never really liked it. When I was served it growing up, the browned sticky meringue on sponge and the darkly toasted almond flakes always tasted a bit like defeat. Perhaps more child-friendly pastries, like Strawberry Layer Cake (page 454) or Princess Torte (page 446), were on my mind. Today I have learned to tolerate this very popular classic, to an extent where I can look in the eye someone who baked it and served it to me, politely thank them and smile, without my true feelings for this otiose cake shining through.

The recipe below is just for the cake and meringue part of the torte as you can really use anything you like for the filling. Most people would use whipped cream and berries or fruit but it's your choice. You are only limited by your own sense of adventure, daring or shame. I've seen everything in there, from mashed banana to Skittles with vanilla cream or liquorice-flavoured yogurt. My childhood *brittatårta* usually used the more restrained combination of whipped cream, raspberries and kiwi fruit.

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Serves: 10–12

For the cake
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar
5 egg yolks
50 ml/2 fl oz (3½ tablespoons) milk
pinch of salt
125 g/4½ oz (1 cup) weak (soft) wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking powder

For the meringue
5 egg whites
160 g/5½ oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) sugar
100 g/3½ oz (1 cup) flaked almonds

Preheat the oven to 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2 and line a 30 x 40-cm/12 x 15-inch baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

To make the cake, combine the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Mix until pale and creamy. With the motor on low, add the egg yolks, one at a time, until they are all fully incorporated. Mix in the milk and the salt. Sift in the flour and the baking powder and mix until smooth.

To make the meringue, place the egg whites in the spotlessly clean, dry bowl of a stand mixer (or a large stainless steel mixing bowl) and start whisking them slowly until they begin to foam. Add the sugar, little by little, making sure you leave enough time between each addition for the sugar crystals to dissolve completely.

After you have added about half of the sugar, start whisking at a faster speed and add the sugar at a slightly faster pace. When all the sugar has been added, lower the speed again and keep whisking the meringue until all the sugar crystals have dissolved and the meringue is stiff.

Spread the cake batter out onto the prepared baking sheet. Spread the meringue on top of the batter and sprinkle on the flaked almonds.

Bake for 25–35 minutes. When it is ready, both the meringue and the almonds should be a nice amber colour. Leave to cool completely.

To assemble, slice the torte in half horizontally using a sharp serrated knife. Spread one section with whipped cream and your choice of other filling ingredients. Sit the other piece on top and transfer carefully to a serving platter.

For image see page opposite

Top to bottom: Almond and Buttercream Torte (page 452); Swedish Almond Meringue Torte (page 466)

ALMOND AND BUTTER EGG-CREAM TORTE / OSCAR II'S TORTE

Oscar IIs tårta / Oscarstårta / Kung Oscars tårta (Sweden)

This cake is named after the very popular King Oscar II of Sweden, who ruled the country between 1872–1907 and you'll find it in every traditional coffee house or pastry shop in Sweden. It is made from 4 layers of almond meringue, sandwiched together with a rich, yolky buttercream filling, and it is at its tastiest the day after it is assembled.

The exterior of the torte should also be spread with buttercream and then covered in toasted flaked almonds. Today, some people simply take layers of the almond meringue and spread on some creamy filling, making it just like any old vacherin-style torte. But this is not right! You shouldn't be able to see the meringue until you cut into the torte. And the cream should be stiff enough to make the sides of the torte straight and smooth before you apply the almond flakes.

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Makes: 8 pieces

5 egg whites
180 g/6½ oz (1½ cups) icing (confectioners') sugar
150 g/5 oz (1½ cups) ground almonds
toasted almond flakes, to decorate

For the buttercream
170 g/6 oz (¾ cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
8 egg yolks
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (4½ sticks) butter,
cut into cubes

Preheat the oven to 125°C/260°F/Gas Mark ½ and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

To make the meringue, place the egg whites in the spotlessly clean, dry bowl of a stand mixer (or a large stainless steel mixing bowl) and start whisking them slowly until they begin to foam. Add the sugar, little by little, making sure you leave enough time between each addition for the sugar crystals to dissolve completely.

After you have added about half of the sugar, start whisking at a faster speed and add the sugar at a slightly faster pace. When all the sugar has been added, lower the speed again and keep whisking the meringue until all the sugar crystals have dissolved and the meringue is stiff. Fold the ground almonds in gently.

Pipe the almond meringue onto the baking (parchment) paper to create four 22 cm/8½ inch discs. The easiest way to do this is to draw a perfect round circle on an extra piece of paper. Place this underneath the parchment as you pipe, to act as a template.

Bake the meringue discs for about 15 minutes, or until set and very lightly coloured. Leave them to cool a bit before you remove them from the parchment and transfer them to wire racks to cool completely.

To make the buttercream, combine the sugar with 200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) water in a small pan and bring to the boil to make a sugar syrup. Place the pan over a medium heat until it reaches 112°C/240°F on a sugar thermometer.

Meanwhile place the egg yolks in a large mixing bowl. When the sugar syrup reaches the correct temperature, drizzle it into the egg yolks slowly and steadily, whisking vigorously as you do. Be careful not to pour too quickly or whisk too slowly otherwise the yolks might curdle.

Place the butter in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Beat at a medium speed and slowly add the cooling sugar and egg mixture. Be sure not to add it too quickly as this will melt the butter and split the emulsion.

As soon as the egg mixture has been incorporated into the butter, turn off the motor. The buttercream should be shiny, thick, yellow and smooth.

Spread a layer of buttercream onto each almond meringue and stack them neatly on top of each other. Spread an even layer of buttercream over the sides and top of the torte, smoothing it neatly. Finish by sprinkling the sides and the top with plenty of toasted almond flakes.

For image see page 449

PANCAKE TORTE

Pannkakstårta (Sweden)

Serve for dessert or as a sweet snack on a Sunday afternoon. Top with fresh berries, if they are in season.

Preparation and cooking time: 10 minutes
Makes: 8 pieces

8 cold leftover Thin Pancakes (page 224)
200 g/7 oz (⅔ cup) jam of your choice (I like
raspberry or blueberry jam, pages 510–11)
500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 1 tablespoon) cream,
whipped to soft peaks
fresh berries, to serve (optional)

Spread 7 of the cold pancakes with a layer of jam followed by a layer of the cream, then stack them in a pile. Top with the final pancake, spread with a layer of cream only. Finish with fresh berries, if you are using them.

GLAZED PASTRIES WITH RASPBERRIES AND ALMOND PASTE

Göteborgare (Sweden)

Named after the second city of Sweden, these cakes – if one looks at published recipes – were at the height of their popularity in the 1970s and 1980s and are still quite common in classic cafés and pastry shops especially on the western coast of the country.

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Resting time: 30 minutes
Makes: 12 pastries

For the dough
75 g/2¾ oz (5 tablespoons) butter,
cold and diced
2 tablespoons sugar
1 egg
150 g/5 oz (1¼ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour

For the edge
200 g/7 oz Almond Paste (page 531), grated
1 egg white

For the filling
100 g/3½ oz Almond Paste (page 531), grated
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter, soft
1 egg

To decorate
100 ml/3½ fl oz (7 tablespoons) raspberry jam
(pages 510–11)
75 g/2¾ oz (½ cup plus 2 tablespoons) icing
(confectioners') sugar
75 g/2¾ oz dark (semisweet) chocolate

Place all of the ingredients for the dough in a food processor and process until combined. Wrap the dough in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and place in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.

For the edge, mix the grated almond paste and egg white together in a bowl. Set aside.

For the filling, mix the grated almond paste, butter and egg together in a separate bowl until a smooth paste. Set aside.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper. Set aside.

Tip the dough out onto a work counter and roll it out to a thickness of 2–3-mm/1/16–1/8-inch. Use a 8-cm/3-inch cookie cutter to make 12 pastries. Place the pastries on the prepared baking sheet, then spread a spoonful of the filling onto the pastries but not on the edges. Put the almond paste-egg white mixture for the edges into a piping (pastry) bag fitted with a nozzle and pipe around the edges of the pastries. Bake for 10 minutes, then leave to cool on wire racks.

To decorate, spread some raspberry jam into the middle of the pastries. Mix the icing (confectioners') sugar and 10–15 ml (2–3 teaspoons) water together in a bowl and use it to glaze the pastries.

Melt the chocolate by following the instructions on page 82. Cut the pastries in half and dip each half, cut side down, into the melted chocolate. Wait until the chocolate has set before serving.

FINNISH ALMOND AND RUM TORTES

Runebergintorttu (Finland)
Runebergstårta / Fredrikatårta (Sweden)

These little almond cakes are named after the Finnish national poet, Johan Ludvig Runeberg (1804–1877), who reputedly ate one for breakfast every day, with a glass of *punsch* on the side. Today *runebergintorttu* can be bought pretty much all year around in Finland, but it is especially popular on and around the 5th of February, which is the commemorative Runeberg Day.

Some people serve the tortes as they are, glazed with white icing (pink is just not right) and topped with a spoonful of raspberry jam (pages 510–11). Others prefer to soak them in a light sugar syrup flavoured with rum, *punsch* or another liqueur. The soaked version is sometimes called *Fredrika tårta*, after Mr Runeberg's wife.

Ideally, you should use special deep Runeberg pans for these tortes or other pans of a similar size.

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Makes: 10 tortes

150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons) butter, soft, plus extra to grease
130 g/4½ oz (1 cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
2 eggs
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) cream
60 g/2¼ oz (½ cup) ground almonds
75 g/2¾ oz (¾ cup) cookie crumbs, or sweet breadcrumbs from stale brioche or another sweet bread
90 g/3¼ oz (¾ cup) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for the pans
1½ teaspoons baking powder
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) sugar syrup flavoured with *punsch* or rum (optional)

To decorate
raspberry jam (pages 510–11)
1 quantity White Icing (page 530)

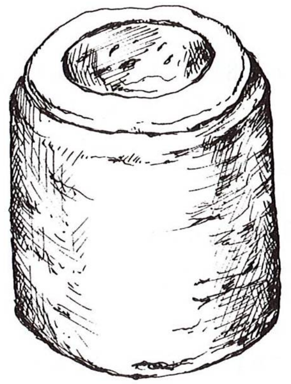
Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Butter and flour the Runeberg pans.

Combine the butter and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat until pale and creamy. Add the eggs one at a time. Add the cream and mix until just incorporated. Add the ground almonds and the cookie crumbs, then sift the flour and baking powder into the bowl. Mix until fully combined.

Divide the cake batter equally among the prepared pans, smooth the surfaces and bake for 15 minutes. For information on how to judge when a cake is done, see pages 69–70.

Turn the cakes out of their pans and leave them on a wire rack to cool. If you would like to soak the tortes, then do so in the *punsch* or rum-flavoured syrup while they are still warm. Otherwise, leave the tortes to cool completely before decorating.

Top each cooled torte neatly with a blob of raspberry jam, then pipe a circle of white icing around the jam (see illustration below).



MEDALS

Medaljer (Sweden)

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Resting time: 30 minutes
Makes: 20 medals

200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, cold and diced
250 g/9 oz (2 cups) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
50 g/2 oz (½ cup) icing (confectioners') sugar
2 tablespoons potato starch
1 egg yolk
250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) cream, whipped, for decorating

For the filling
½ vanilla bean, split and seeds scraped
2 egg yolks
1½ tablespoons sugar
2 tablespoons weak (soft) wheat flour
250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) cream

For the icing
230 g/8¼ oz (2 cups) icing (confectioners') sugar
1 tablespoon cocoa powder

Place the butter and flour in a food processor and process until crumbly. Add the icing (confectioners') sugar and potato starch, then add the egg yolk and process into a dough. Wrap the dough in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave to rest in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the filling. Mix the vanilla seeds with the egg yolks, sugar and flour in a bowl.

Place the cream and scraped vanilla bean in a pan and bring to the boil over a medium heat, while stirring. Add the egg mixture to the pan and bring to the boil again, then remove from the heat and leave to cool.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Unwrap the dough and place on a lightly floured work counter and roll it out to 2–3 mm/1⁄16–⅛ inch in thickness. Use a 6-cm/2½-inch cookie cutter or a glass to cut out 40 cookies. Place them on the prepared baking sheets and bake for 8–10 minutes. Leave to cool on wire racks.

Meanwhile, make the icing by mixing all the ingredients in a bowl with 3 teaspoons water. Spread the icing onto half of the cookies.

Spread 1 tablespoon of the filling on the other half of the cookies, then put one cookie with icing on top of each cookie with filling.

Place the whipped cream for the decoration in a piping (pastry) bag fitted with a nozzle and use it to decorate the edges of the pastries.

VANILLA CUSTARD HEARTS

Vaniljhjärtan (Sweden)

This is a variation on the Norwegian heart-shaped pastry *linser* (page 474), the recipe for which was first published in Sweden as early as 1913. To make these you need the special heart-shaped mould illustrated, see right.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Resting time: at least 30 minutes
Makes: 12 hearts

For the dough
200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, at room temperature, plus extra for greasing
140 g/4¾ oz (1 cup plus 2 tablespoons) icing (confectioners') sugar, plus extra for dusting
330 g/11½ oz (2¾ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
½ teaspoon salt
1 egg

For the filling
1 quantity Vanilla Custard (page 532)

Place the butter and the dry ingredients for the dough in a food processor and process until it starts to combine. Add the egg and process until combined. Wrap the dough in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave it to rest in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the vanilla custard following the recipe on page 532 and leave it to cool.

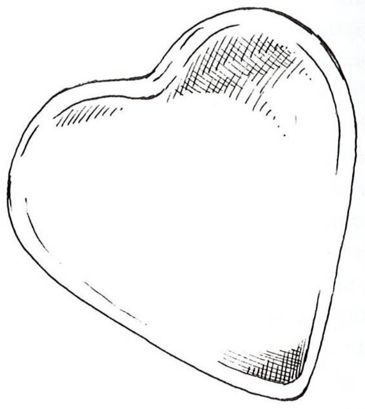
Butter 12 heart-shaped moulds and flour them lightly. Place them on a work counter a few centimetres apart. Unwrap and roll out two thirds of the dough to a 3-mm/⅛-inch thickness. Carefully lift the dough up using the rolling pin and place it over the moulds. Push the dough gently into the moulds using a clean cloth or something similar, then roll on top of the moulds with the rolling pin so that the dough loosens from the edges.

Spoon the cooled vanilla custard into a piping (pastry) bag and fill the dough-lined moulds.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4.

Roll out the rest of the dough on the work counter and place it over the moulds as a lid. Press around the edges so that they close completely. Place the moulds on a baking sheet and bake for 15 minutes.

Carefully remove the custard hearts from the moulds while they are still warm and leave them to cool. Sift some icing (confectioners') sugar on top before serving.



INDIVIDUAL NAPOLEON PASTRY IN SWEDEN

Napoleonskake (Norway)
Napoleonbakelse (Sweden)

There are desserts and individual pastries in almost every country in the world that are referred to as a 'Napoleon'. Most of them are based loosely on the French millefeuille described by François Pierre La Varenne in 1651 and perfected into something very similar to what you find in France today and created by Marie-Antoine Carême in the early 1800s. The Napoleon according to us Swedes was invented by Johan Brokvist after he studied pastry in Austria. He brought it back to Sweden when he opened his own pastry shop in 1876 in the central Swedish town of Växjö, a business still run today by his descendants that still produces the original recipe. Most Swedish Napoleons of today are glazed with a layer of raspberry jam and sugar icing but the original recipe says currant jelly. There is also some debate as to whether there should really be apple compote in the bottom layer or just vanilla cream.

Because I prefer raspberries to currants the recipe below is written that way. I also think that a Napoleon without apple compote is pretty much inedible so the recipe contains that too, but it's up to you what you prefer, just adapt it accordingly.

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Resting time: 1 hour
Makes: 20 pieces

For the puff pastry
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (4 cups plus 2 tablespoons) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra to dust
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (4½ sticks) butter, cold and diced
1½ teaspoons salt
2 egg yolks
1 tablespoon lemon juice

For the vanilla custard
500 ml/18 fl oz (2 cups plus 1 tablespoon) milk
2 vanilla beans, split and seeds scraped
125 g/4½ oz (½ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
6 egg yolks
40 g/1½ oz (⅓ cup) cornflour (cornstarch)
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter

For the fillings
150 g/5 oz Apple Compote (page 523)
1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) cream, whipped
150 g/5 oz (½ cup) raspberry jam (pages 510–11)
300 g/11 oz (2½ cups) icing (confectioners') sugar

Place the flour, butter and salt for the puff pastry in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment and beat until it starts to combine. Add 200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) water, the egg yolks and lemon juice and work the dough until it's just combined. It doesn't matter if there are a few small lumps of butter left. Wrap the dough in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave it to rest in the refrigerator for about 20 minutes.

Unwrap the dough and place it on a lightly floured work counter and knead gently, then roll it out to a rectangle. Roll the dough in one direction only, until 3 times the width, about 20 x 50 cm/8 x 20 inches. Try to keep the edges straight and even.

Fold the top third of the dough down to the centre, then the bottom third up and over that. Wrap in clingfilm and leave it in the refrigerator for 10 minutes. Give the dough a quarter turn (to the left or right) and roll out again to 3 times the length. Fold as before, cover with clingfilm and place in the refrigerator for 10 minutes. Repeat the same procedure once more, then chill in the refrigerator for at least 20 minutes before rolling out to use.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Roll the dough out to about 3-mm/⅛-inch thickness, divide it in half and place each half on the prepared baking sheets. Prick the dough with a fork and bake until golden. Leave to cool.

To make the vanilla custard, place the milk, vanilla beans and 50 g/2 oz (¼ cup) of the sugar in a pan and bring to the boil over a medium heat. Remove from the heat and leave for about 10 minutes before removing the vanilla beans.

Whisk the egg yolks with the rest of the sugar and the cornflour (cornstarch) in a bowl, then add this to the vanilla and milk mixture. Bring to the boil over a medium heat while stirring constantly. Boil for a few minutes, then remove the pan from the heat and add the butter, while stirring constantly. Spoon the custard into the piping (pastry) bag fitted with a nozzle.

Cut each puff pastry into 3 equal pieces. Spread the apple compote on the bottom layer of each piece, then pipe the vanilla custard on top. Add the next layer of pastry and spread the whipped cream on top. Finally, add the last layer of pastry, downside facing up, and spread a thin layer of raspberry jam on top.

Mix the icing (confectioners') sugar and 50 ml/2 fl oz (4 tablespoons) room-temperature water together in a bowl and glaze the top of the pastries.

If you have time, it's easier to leave the pastries to rest in the refrigerator for 30 minutes before cutting each one into about 10 pieces.

LEMON CREAM PIES

Linser (Denmark)
Linser (Norway)

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Resting time: 30 minutes
Makes: 12 pies

For the dough
- 200 g/7 oz (1¾ sticks) butter, at room temperature, plus extra to grease
- 140 g/4¾ oz (1 cup plus 2 tablespoons) icing (confectioners') sugar
- 330 g/11½ oz (2¾ cups) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 egg

For the filling
- 2 eggs
- 140 g/5 oz (1 cup plus 3 tablespoon) sugar
- zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter

Place the butter and all of the dry ingredients for the dough in a food processor and process until it starts to combine. Add the egg and process until combined. Wrap the dough in clingfilm (plastic wrap) and leave it to rest in the refrigerator for about 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the lemon cream filling. Place the eggs and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat until pale and fluffy. Add the lemon zest and juice.

Place the butter in a medium pan and melt over a medium heat. Add the egg and sugar mixture to the butter while whisking all the time. Keep whisking until the cream thickens, then remove the pan from the heat.

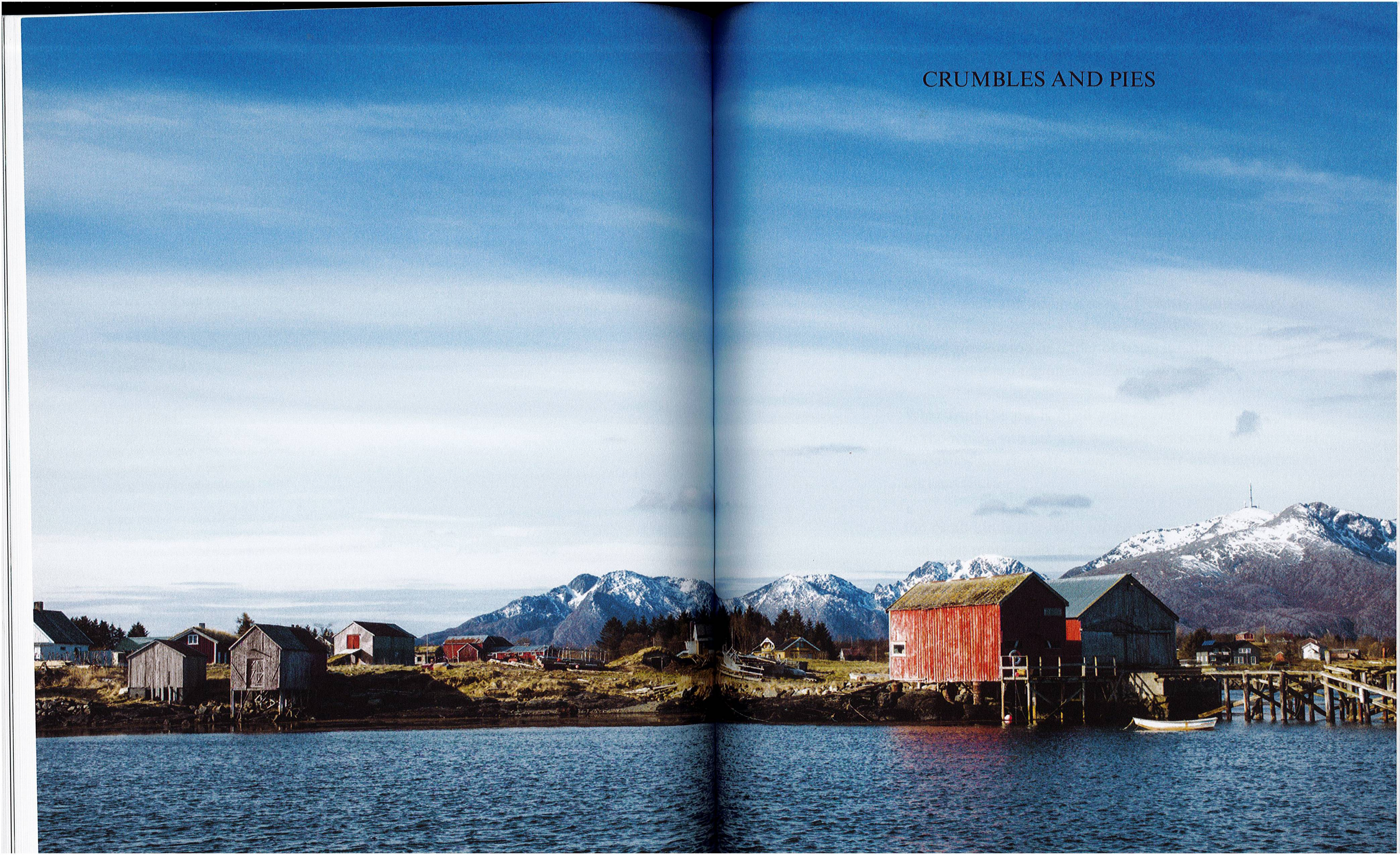
Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter and lightly flour 12 tartlet or *mazarin* moulds. Place them on a work counter a few centimetres apart.

Unwrap the dough and place it on a work counter. Roll out two thirds of it to a 3-mm/⅛-inch thickness. Carefully lift the dough up using the rolling pin and place it over the moulds. Push the dough gently into the moulds using a clean cloth or something similar, then roll on top of the moulds with the rolling pin so that the dough loosens from the edges.

Use a spoon to fill the moulds with the lemon cream. Roll out the rest of the dough on the work counter and place it over the moulds to form 'lids'. Press around the edges so that they close completely. Place the moulds on a baking sheet and bake for 15 minutes.

Carefully remove the pies from the moulds while they are still warm, then leave the pies to cool down. Sift some icing (confectioners') sugar on top before serving.

CRUMBLES AND PIES



Previous page: Vega archipelago, Norway, May 2014.

For most of those living in the Nordics pie and crumble are not necessarily two different things. There's lots of overlap. A pie in most other parts of the world is a shortcrust pastry or similar which lines a pan that is subsequently filled with something and then baked, often under a cover of a second layer of the same pastry. In the Nordics this is also a pie, but so is a pan filled with compote and topped with crumble before being baked, regardless of whether the pan is lined with pastry or not.

Pretty much any combination of crusty short pastry and sugared fruits baked in a pan, regardless of whether the pastry goes on top or under or both, is considered to be pie by us, and it is a region-wide favourite dessert.

What fruit the pie is filled with depends mainly on where in the region you are and what the season is. My personal favourites are rhubarb in early summer and blueberries in autumn (fall).

Pie of all kinds is usually served warm or cold as a dessert and a bit more rarely as *fika* (pages 44–9) with condiments like whipped cream, Vanilla Custard Sauce or Cream (page 532) or Vanilla Ice Cream (page 534).

CRUMBLE, BASE RECIPE

Smulpaj (Sweden)

Few things are as tasty as a good crumble. I like recipes containing some rolled oats; I like the way they caramelize. Serve a crumble warm or at room temperature, by itself or with a dollop of whipped cream or some Vanilla Ice Cream (page 534).

Sometimes people cook a crumble at a slightly too high temperature, making the topping itself brown quickly and cook, but leaving the filling undercooked – or even semi-raw. This is not very tasty. I suggest a temperature of 175°C/345°F/ Gas Mark 4 and at least 35 minutes of baking time is essential.

Use with any soft fruits like raspberries, blueberries, gooseberries or similar. It also works really well with any fruit that softens with cooking like rhubarb or apples. The amount of sugar depends on how acidic the fruit and how sweet you like your pie to be. I usually add about 100 g/3½ oz to 500 g/1 lb 2 oz oz of fruits ready for the oven. The amount of starch you need to add really depends on how watery your fruit is. For an apple I don't add any potato or cornstarch at all, whilst for blueberries I might add a tablespoon to the quantity mentioned above.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Resting time: 10 minutes
Serves: 6–8

For the crumble topping
150 g/5 oz (1¼ sticks) cold butter, cut into 1 cm/½ inch cubes
120 g/4 oz (1 cup) plain (all-purpose) flour
60 g/2¼ oz (½ cup) rolled oats
150 g/5 oz (¾ cup) sugar
good pinch of salt

Place all the ingredients for the crumble topping in a large mixing bowl. Work with your hands until the butter starts to warm up a little and mix with the other ingredients. The overall texture should be rather granular, but there shouldn't be too many lumps of pure butter in the final crumble.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4.

Mix your choice of fruit or berries with sugar and spices. Spread over the bottom of an ovenproof dish in an even layer.

Sprinkle the crumble mix over the fruit in an even layer and bake for about 35 minutes, or until the crumble is golden and the fruit is bubbling and cooked through.

Let the crumble sit for a good 10 minutes before serving.

APPLE CRUMBLE

Äppelsmulpaj (Sweden)

Add a dash of lemon juice to the apple and sugar mix if you feel that the apples lack acidity. Also add ground cassia cinnamon if you like it.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Resting time: 10 minutes
Serves: 6–8

1 quantity Crumble, Base Recipe (see left)

For the filling
6 cooking apples, peeled, cored and coarsely chopped
sugar, to taste
dash of lemon juice (optional)
ground cassia cinnamon, to taste (optional)

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/ Gas Mark 4.

Mix the apples with sugar, to taste, and lemon juice and cinnamon to taste, if using. Spread over the bottom of an ovenproof dish in an even layer.

Sprinkle the crumble mix over the fruit in an even layer and bake for about 35 minutes, or until the crumble is golden and the fruit is bubbling and cooked through.

Let the crumble sit for a good 10 minutes before serving.

RHUBARB CHEWY CARAMEL CRUMBLE

Knäckig rabarberpaj (Sweden)

This is a little bit like a crumble, but it has more sugar and fat in it so the topping kind of turns into crunchy/chewy toffee when baked.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 10 pieces

150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons) butter, plus extra for the pie dish
500 g/1 lb 2 oz rhubarb, cut in 1 cm/ ½ inch pieces
50 ml/2 fl oz (3⅓ tablespoons) golden syrup
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) cream
120 g/4 oz (1 cup) weak (soft) wheat flour
75 g/2¾ oz (¾ cup) rolled oats
1 teaspoon baking powder
180 g/6½ oz (¾ cup plus 3 tablespoons) sugar
whipped cream or Vanilla Ice Cream (page 534), to serve

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Butter a ovenproof dish and spread the rhubarb out over the bottom of the dish.

Melt the butter, golden syrup and cream together in a pan over a medium heat. Remove from the heat, add all of the dry ingredients and mix until combined.

Spread the batter on top of the rhubarb and bake for about 15 minutes, or until golden. Leave the pie to cool down a little before serving with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.

BLUEBERRY PIE

Blåbärspaj (Sweden)

This classic Nordic blueberry pie may be served warm or cold, on its own or with vanilla custard, whipped cream or Vanilla Ice Cream (page 534).

Preparation and cooking time: 1–1¼ hours
Setting time: 1 hour
Makes: 8 pieces

For the pie crust
150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons) butter, melted and cooled, plus extra to grease
180 g/6¼ oz (¾ cup plus 3 tablespoons) sugar
pinch of salt
360 g/12¾ oz (3 cups) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
2 teaspoons baking powder

For the filling
700 g/1 lb 8½ oz (4½ cups) blueberries or bilberries, fresh or frozen
5 tablespoons potato starch
sugar, to taste

Preheat the oven to 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2. Butter a 24-cm/9½-inch springform cake pan and dust with flour.

To make the pie crust, mix the melted butter, sugar and salt in a mixing bowl. Sift on the flour and baking powder and mix until fully incorporated.

With lightly floured hands, press the mixture into the prepared pan, making sure it reaches all the way up the sides.

In another bowl, mix the berries with the potato starch and sugar, then tip into the unbaked crust.

Bake for at least 45 minutes, or until the crust is nicely golden. It is important that the potato starch is allowed to cook properly so the pie doesn't end up too runny and taste starchy. Leave to set for at least 1 hour after you take it out of the oven.

BLUEBERRY AND SOUR CREAM PIE

Mustikkapiirakka (Finland)

When you search for *mustikkapiirakka* on the internet, or ask Finnish people what it is, it seems that most consider it to be this. It comprises a pie crust which is not precooked, but rather baked together with its filling – usually blueberries and a simple kind of sour cream custard. I have seen this kind of dish many times in other Nordic countries – we even make one in my own family with raspberries – but they all seem to be quite recent inventions in comparison with the Finnish one. Perhaps Finland is the origin of this fantastic pie?

Preparation time and cooking time: 50–60 minutes
Resting time: 10 minutes
Makes: 8 pieces

For the pie crust
250 g/9 oz (2¼ sticks) soft butter, plus extra to grease
160 g/5½ oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) sugar
2 eggs
260 g/9¼ oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) weak (soft) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
2 teaspoons baking powder
pinch of salt

For the filling
400 g/14 oz (1⅔ cups) full-fat sour cream or crème fraîche
2 eggs
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar
300 g/11 oz (2 cups) blueberries or bilberries, fresh or frozen

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Butter a 24 cm/9½ inch cake pan and dust with flour.

To make the pie crust, combine the butter, sugar and salt in the bowl of a stand mixer. Beat until white and fluffy, then, with the motor on low, add the eggs, one at a time. Sift over the flour and baking powder and mix until fully incorporated, but for no longer.

With lightly floured hands, press the mixture into the prepared pan. Make sure it reaches fairly high up the sides. The pie crust should not be too thin.

In another bowl, stir the sour cream or crème fraîche, eggs and sugar together until smooth. Pour the mixture into the unbaked crust, then sprinkle in the blueberries or bilberries. Bake for 30–40 minutes, or until the filling is set and the crust is lightly golden.

Once the pie is done, leave it in the pan for about 10 minutes before releasing it. This makes it easier to separate the pie from the pan. Don't leave it for much longer than 10 minutes, as this can make the crust soggy and it won't have the proper crunch.

SCANIAN APPLE PIE

Skånsk äppelkaka (Sweden)

This dessert might be one of the most delicious apple pies ever invented. It's traditionally served after a goose dinner on St Martin's Day in the southern Swedish region of Skåne, with thick vanilla custard on the side.

Scanian apple pie is made with crumbs from a particular kind of dark rye bread called *Kavring* (page 128), which are slowly fried with butter and sugar to make the crust, before it is filled with Apple Compote (page 523).

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 8 pieces

For the pie crust
150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons) butter
150 g/5 oz (¾ cup) sugar
750 ml/7½ oz (3 cups) fresh breadcrumbs from a *Kavring* loaf (page 128)
pinch of salt

For the filling
500 g/17 oz (2 cups plus 1 tablespoon) Apple Compote (page 523) or about a half quantity

Preheat the oven to 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2.

Melt the butter and the sugar in a cast-iron frying pan with an ovenproof handle. When the butter has melted, but before it starts to brown, add the breadcrumbs to the pan. Continue cooking over a medium heat, stirring from time to time, until the mixture caramelizes to a deep brown and smells, tastes and looks fantastic.

Set aside a third of the mix. Use a spoon to press the remaining caramelized crumbs into the bottom and sides of the pan to form a shell. Pour in the apple compote and finish by sprinkling the reserved caramelized crumbs over the top in a thick layer to seal the apple in from all directions. Make sure that the top layer is solid and has no gaps before putting the pie into the oven. Bake for about 35 minutes, or until it is all warmed through, but not boiling inside.

Take the pie out of the oven and leave it to cool down to room temperature. By this point it will be completely stuck to the inside of the pan.

Just before serving, heat the pie over a medium heat until the sugar adhering to the pan melts and the pie comes loose. Invert the pie onto a serving platter. You have only got a few minutes to get the pie out of the pan before the whole thing starts to warm up and soften, which makes it impossible.

FINNISH FUDGE PIE

Tjinuskipaj (Sweden)

A fudge pie similar to this is very popular as a birthday cake in Finland and it is fantastic with some whipped cream on the side and some tart berries, like lingonberies.

Although the pie itself is quick to assemble, remember that the fudge sauce for the filling takes up to 3 hours to make and you also need to allow a good half hour for it to set.

Preparation time: 3 hours
Setting time: 30 minutes
Makes: 8 pieces

1 prebaked Basic Pie Crust, Sweet (page 543)
1 double quantity Finnish Fudge / Caramel Sauce (page 534)

Make the Finnish fudge sauce following the recipe on page 534, but boiled for longer, until thicker. A temperature of about 120°C/250°F on a sugar thermometer results in a creamy filling that is thick enough to cut.

Pour the hot fudge sauce into the prebaked pie crust and leave it at room temperature to cool and set before serving with whipped cream and berries.

DESSERTS

Previous page: Fjord, Norway, spring 2013.

There was a bit of debate about this chapter, especially on the subject of what recipes it was going to contain, and where to draw the line as to what 'baking' actually means.

The latter has been an ongoing question throughout the production of this whole book, and in the end the only answer I have, and the guiding principle for choosing what to include and what to exclude, has been that whatever it is, it needs to feel like it belongs. This has nothing to do with whether whatever recipe we are talking about has ever seen the inside of an oven or not, or if it contains grains and cereals, or any other technical principle that might be used to classify what baking is. This chapter contains many recipes that are, without any doubt, baking, but also others that are just desserts that have nothing to do with baking in any practical sense, but which would be impossible for me, being Nordic, not to describe in a chapter called 'desserts' in a book about the food culture of the Nordic region.

Anyhow, these desserts are all delicious and worth trying out regardless of whether or not they are considered baking.

RICE PUDDING

Risgrynspudding (Sweden)

Serve warm with Cordial Soup (page 514), or a spoonful of a jam you like (page 510) and some whipped cream.

Preparation and cooking time: 40 minutes
Serves: 4

2 tablespoons sugar
1 egg
½ quantity Rice Porridge (page 242)

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6.

Stir the sugar and egg into the rice porridge. Pour the batter into an ovenproof dish to a depth of about 4 cm/1½ inches and bake for about 30 minutes until golden and fluffy.

RICE PUDDING FOR DESSERT

Risalamande (Denmark)
Riskrem (Norway)
Ris ala Malta (Sweden)

To have cold, sweetened rice porridge mixed with whipped cream started to be more common with the Danish upper class around the beginning of the twentieth century. The Danish name for the dish, *risalamande*, comes from the French *riz à l'amande* – rice with almonds – which is, indeed, how it is served in Denmark. The Swedish name, *ris ala Malta*, is presumed to derive from the Danish name, rather than having anything to do with the island of Malta. It changes the dish even further from the original French one, dropping the almond content in the process. In Sweden and Norway this dessert is often served with Cordial Soup (page 514) or Berry Compote (page 524).

Preparation time: 10 minutes
Serves: 4

400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) cream
½ quantity chilled Rice Porridge (page 242)
sugar, to taste

Whip the cream to soft peaks in a bowl.

Sweeten the porridge to taste – it should be quite sweet – then stir in about half of the cream so it is fully incorporated. Gently fold in the rest of the cream and serve.

DANISH ALMOND RICE PUDDING

Risalamande (Denmark)

Sometimes, in addition to the chopped almonds, this dish is flavoured with a bit of bitter almond extract and/or some vanilla. It is most often served with a Sweet Cherry Sauce (page 535). The hiding of a whole almond in the Christmas Rice Porridge common in other Nordic countries is in Denmark practised with this Almond Rice Pudding. The person who gets the almond receives a small present called *mandelgave* (almond gift), often a marzipan pig.

Preparation time: 10 minutes
Serves: 4

400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) cream
½ quantity chilled Rice Porridge
  (page 242)
sugar, to taste
few drops bitter almond extract (optional)
Vanilla Sugar (page 536), to taste or
  ½ vanilla bean, scraped (optional)
1 large handful blanched almonds,
  coarsely chopped

Whip the cream to soft peaks in a bowl.

Sweeten the porridge to taste – it should be quite sweet – then add your choice of flavourings. Stir in about half of the cream so it is fully incorporated, then add the chopped almonds, fold them in with the rest of the cream and serve.

RICE PUDDING WITH ORANGE

Apelsinris (Sweden)

This dessert is sometimes also decorated with a sprinkling of toasted almond flakes or some grated chocolate. When I was growing up, canned mandarin segments were often used, which gave the dish a very particular flavour.

Preparation time: 15 minutes
Serves: 4

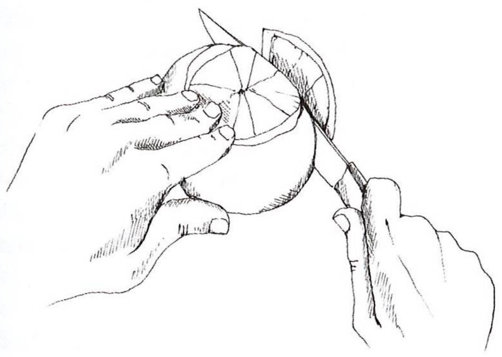
400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) cream
½ quantity chilled Rice Porridge
  (page 242)
sugar, to taste
Vanilla Sugar (page 536), to taste, or
  ½ vanilla bean, scraped (optional)
4 oranges
zest of 1 orange (optional)
toasted almond flakes or grated chocolate
  (optional)

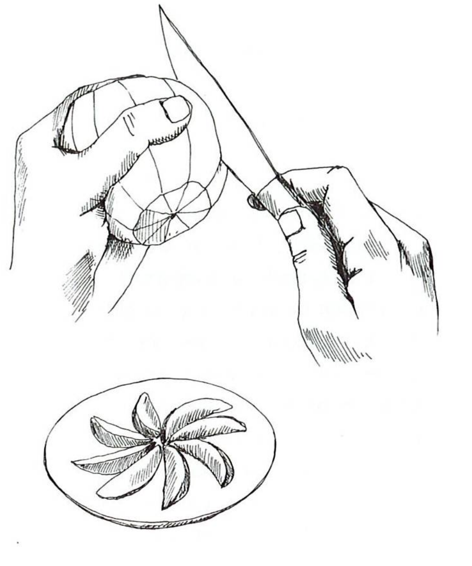
Whip the cream to soft peaks in a bowl.

Sweeten the porridge to taste – it should be quite sweet – then add the vanilla sugar or seeds, if using.

Use a knife to peel the oranges. Slice the segments out of their skin casings, making sure there's no trace of pith or membrane (see illustrations below and right). Set aside.

Stir half the whipped cream into the porridge so it is fully incorporated, then add half the orange segments (supremes) and fold them in with the rest of the cream. Top with the remaining orange segments and sprinkle on a little grated zest, if using.





SEMOLINA PUDDING

Mannagrynspudding (Sweden)

Serve this pudding lukewarm with whipped cream and jam (pages 510–11) or Cordial Soup (page 514).

Preparation and cooking time: 40 minutes
Serves: 4

1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) milk
1 teaspoon salt
70 g/2¾ oz (⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons)
  wheat semolina
2 tablespoons sugar
2 bitter almonds, grated, or some bitter almond
  or almond essence if you can't find them
1 egg

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6.

Combine the milk and salt in a pan and bring to the boil over a medium heat. As soon as it boils, whisk in the semolina, making sure that no lumps form, then simmer for 5 minutes.

Leave the semolina mixture to cool for a few minutes before stirring in the sugar, bitter almonds and egg. Pour the batter into an ovenproof dish to a depth of about 4 cm/1½ inches and bake for about 30 minutes until nicely golden and fluffy.

FINNISH RYE MALT PUDDING

Mämmi / Memma (Finland)
Memma (Sweden)

Mämmi is traditionally eaten in Finland for dessert during Easter. It is, as with many other Finnish casseroles, both savoury and sweet, based on the breakdown of starch into sugars by amylase enzymes in the malt. *Mämmi* was traditionally baked and distributed in baskets made from birch bark, called *rove* in Finnish and *rivor* in Swedish, but today it is almost always sold in cardboard boxes, often with a birch pattern printed on them. *Mämmi* is often served with cream and sugar, but in many homes also with Vanilla Ice Cream (page 534), a more modern pairing.

Preparation and cooking time: 6 hours
Serves: 4 generous portions, with a bit to spare

2 strips dried bitter orange peel
400 g/14 oz (3 cups plus 1 tablespoon) coarse rye flour
150 g/5 oz (1 cup plus 1 tablespoon) ground rye malt
1 teaspoon salt
140 g/4¾ oz (⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons) golden syrup

Pour 2 litres/68 fl oz (8½ cups) water into a heavy-bottomed pot. Add the strips of orange peel and heat to 60°C/140°F. Add the flour and the malt and mix well. Keep the temperature as close as possible to 60°C/140°F for about 3 hours, while the enzymes in the malt work on the starch in the rye flour. Don't allow it to get any hotter, as this would destroy the enzymes. Just for fun, taste the mixture just after you have added the flour and then once again at the end of the 3 hours. I always find the difference in sweetness quite fascinating.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4.

Now, add the salt and the golden syrup to the mixture and bring to the boil while stirring. Be careful not to let it stick to the bottom of the pot and burn. Simmer for 10 minutes over a medium heat before pouring into an ovenproof dish. Do not fill it all the way to the top since the *mämmi* will expand a bit in the oven.

Cook for 3 hours. Stir every 15 minutes during the first half of the cooking time. Eat hot, or leave covered in a cool place for a few days before serving.

FINNISH QUARK PUDDING

Pasha (Finland)

This rich dessert is traditionally served for Easter in Finland and in some of the other Baltic countries. It is also part of Russian Orthodox Easter traditions from where it originates. The name *pasha* refers to the Russian word *Пасха* meaning Easter. On the side of the pudding itself the Cyrillic letters 'XB' are often inscribed, being short for *Христос воскресе* (*Hristos voskrese*), Christ is risen.

Pasha is usually made in a traditional mould, which allows the mixture to drain and firm up. You'll also need some clean muslin (cheesecloth) to line the mould.

Serve *pasha* just as it is or with some fresh fruit or candied cherries on the side.

Preparation time: 20 minutes
Draining: at least 24 hours
Serves: 20

2 egg yolks
270 g/9½ oz (1⅓ cups) sugar
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter, melted and cooled
100 g/3½ oz (⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons) *smetana* or sour cream
750 g/1 lb 10 oz (3 cups plus 2 tablespoons) quark
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) coarsely chopped candied cherries
50 g/2 oz (⅓ cup) coarsely chopped raisins
50 g/2 oz (⅓ cup) coarsely chopped candied citrus peel
50 g/2 oz (⅓ cup) blanched, skinned and coarsely chopped almonds

Line a *pasha* mould with a single layer of muslin (cheesecloth).

Combine the egg yolks and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer and whisk until white and creamy. Add the cooled melted butter and incorporate fully. Add the *smetana* or sour cream and quark and mix in well.

Add the dried fruit, citrus peel and almonds and mix them into the *pasha* thoroughly.

Pour the batter into the prepared mould, set it on a shallow tray or baking sheet to collect the liquid, and leave it to drain in a cool place for at least 24 hours.

When ready to serve, invert the mould onto a serving platter and carefully remove the muslin.

SCANIAN FESTIVE CAKE BAKED ON A SKEWER

Spettekaka (Sweden)

Spettekaka is traditionally eaten at special occasions like weddings, as a dessert with strong coffee served alongside it, or sometimes with Vanilla Ice Cream (page 534), and occasionally with some fortified wine.

Spettekaka means 'skewer cake' or 'spit cake' because it is made by applying a ribbon of batter (made from eggs, potato starch and sugar) onto a horizontal wooden skewer that rotates slowly next to a heat source – traditionally a wood fire. It takes several hours of constant work to cook a medium-size cake, as it needs to dry out slowly without colouring. Today there are only a few bakeries left where *spettekaka* are still made by hand over an open flame. Very few people actually have the skill and equipment to make this in their homes.

Once cooked, the cake is glazed with icing (frosting). The colour of the icing and the visual texture of the cake – depending on how you layer the ribbon of batter – differs from region to region. The cake is traditionally cut with the blade from a very fine-toothed hacksaw and it is considered better to have very straight and precise cuts with no breakage. *Spettekaka* is cut into cube-shaped blocks and the top of the cake should be left standing for as long as possible, while pieces are carved away around it.

Spettekaka is a very dry cake and needs to be consumed straight after cooking or preserved in an airtight bag.

SWEDISH CURD CAKES

Ostkaka (Sweden)

Desserts based on fresh curds are commonly eaten year round at festive occasions, and in some parts of Sweden they are considered more or less essential for holidays like Christmas and Easter.

The best-known examples of Swedish curd cakes come from the central region of Småland and from the eastern region of Hälsingland. The Småland version is richer and more grainy and it is always flavoured with bitter almonds. It is most often served lukewarm with whipped cream and berries or jam (pages 510–11). The Hälsingland version is smoother and denser, not flavoured with bitter almonds and is often cut in thick slices to be reheated in a frying pan or skillet, or in the oven with a bit of cream. It is usually served with Cordial Soup (page 514) or cloudberry jam and whipped cream. In most cases curd cake from Hälsingland, as opposed to the one from Småland, contains no eggs or sugar.

The leftover whey from making curd cakes can be used to make, for example, reduced whey cheeses like Brown Cheese (page 537).

CURD CAKE FROM SMÅLAND

Småländsk ostkaka (Sweden)

Traditionally, curd cakes in Småland are served starting from the middle of the pan and working outwards to the edges in widening circles. The reason for this is debated, but one theory is that in the old days, when much ovenware was made from tinned copper, the centre, which was potentially less exposed to the toxic heavy metals, was offered to more prominent eaters and guests, while the edges of the cake, which had been in direct contact with the metal, were given to workers and people who were considered less important. Another theory for the serving etiquette states that it was because the browned crusty parts of the cake were considered less fine than the creamy pale centre.

It is hard to make this recipe in smaller quantities, so freeze leftover curd cake – it stores for many months in the freezer.

Preparation and cooking time: 2½–3 hours
Makes: 2 cakes, each serving 6–8

3 litres/101 fl oz (12½ cups) full-fat, unpasteurized and unhomogenized milk
50 g/2 oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 tablespoon liquid rennet
butter, to grease
3 eggs
50 g/2 oz (¼ cup) sugar
40 g/1½ oz (⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons) ground almonds
300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) cream
2 bitter almonds or a little bitter almond or almond extract

Pour the milk into a large pot, then sift in the flour and whisk vigorously to make sure that no lumps form. Heat the milk slowly over a low heat to 35°C/95°F. Add the liquid rennet and immediately mix well. Cover the pot with a lid and leave it beside the stove to set and curdle. It will take 30 minutes, or possibly a bit longer. If you touch the surface of the curd it should leave a distinct milky-white film on your finger.

Cut the curds with a big whisk. You only want to break the mixture up into coarse chunks at this stage, so don't make the pieces too small. Cover the pan again and leave for another 30 minutes or so. You will see that the curds start to sink in the increasing amount of liquid as they release more whey.

Use a colander to transfer the curds into a sieve lined with muslin (cheesecloth) and leave them for another 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and butter an ovenproof dish of about 20 cm/8 inches in diameter.

Whisk the eggs and sugar in a mixing bowl. Add the ground almonds and the cream, then use a microplane or fine grater to grate in the bitter almonds. Mix everything together gently, then add this mixture to the curds in a big bowl and incorporate fully without breaking the curds up too much.

Pour the batter into the prepared dish, but don't fill it more than three-quarters full. Bake for about 1 hour, or until the cake has set and the surface is golden. If it seems to be getting too dark, but isn't yet completely set, cover with a sheet of aluminium foil and continue baking.

CURD CAKE FROM HÄLSINGLAND

Hälsingeostkaka (Sweden)

As with the previous recipe, it is hard to make in smaller quantities, so freeze leftover curd cake – it stores for many months in the freezer.

Preparation and cooking time: 3¼ hours
Reheating time: 10 minutes
Makes: 1 cake, serving 8–10

5 litres/169 fl oz (20 cups) full-fat (whole), unpasteurized and unhomogenized milk
65 g/2½ oz (⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 tablespoon liquid rennet
butter, to grease
200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) cream

Pour the milk into a heavy pot and heat it slowly over a low heat to 35°C/95°F. Sift in the flour and whisk vigorously to make sure that no lumps form. Add the liquid rennet and immediately mix well. Cover and set aside for 30 minutes or so for the milk to set and curdle.

Use a knife to cut a cross in the curd to form 4 large wedge-shaped chunks. Cover and leave for another 30 minutes or so for the curds to release more whey.

Use a colander to transfer the curds to a sieve lined with muslin (cheesecloth) and leave for 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7 and butter a 23 x 13 x 8-cm/9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pan.

Transfer the curds into the prepared loaf pan and bake for about 1 hour, or until the cake has set and the surface is golden.

Remove the cake from the oven and allow it to cool in the pan. Transfer to the refrigerator and leave to chill completely.

To serve, preheat the oven to 250°C/480°F/Gas Mark 9. Turn the curd cake out of the pan and cut into 1-cm/½-inch thick slices. Place the slices in an ovenproof dish, pour on the cream and bake in the oven until just golden brown.

RICE AND SAFFRON OVEN PANCAKE FROM GOTLAND

Gotländsk saffranspannkaka /
Gotlandspannkaka (Sweden)

Oven pancakes have been commonly served as dessert on the island of Gotland for many hundreds of years. Traditionally made on Christmas Day with leftover rice porridge from Christmas Eve, this dessert was also served on other big occasions, like weddings.

Gotlandspannkaka as we see it today though was developed during the second half of the nineteenth century, when people added the rice, the saffron and the sugar to the pre-existing recipes.

It was considered a very festive dessert for those who could afford it, due to the price of both sugar and saffron.

Gotlandspannkaka is traditionally served with whipped cream and dewberry jam (pages 510–11).

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Serves: 10

1 quantity Rice Porridge (page 242), cold
butter, to grease
3 eggs
400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) milk
2 tablespoons sugar
1 g/0.04 oz saffron (page 75)
1 handful almonds, finely chopped

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6. Butter an ovenproof dish.

Put the cold rice porridge into a large mixing bowl. In a separate bowl, mix the eggs with the milk, then pour into the porridge, together with the remaining ingredients. Mix until thoroughly combined, then pour the batter into the prepared dish, to a depth of about 3 cm/1¼ inches. Bake until golden.

SEMOLINA OVEN PANCAKE FROM ÅLAND

Ahvenanmaan pannukakku (Finland)
Ålandspannkaka (Sweden)

This dessert is often served lukewarm with Prune Compote (page 524) and whipped cream.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour, plus cooling time
Serves: 10

1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) milk
1 teaspoon salt
70 g/2¾ oz (⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons) wheat semolina
45 g/1¾ oz (⅓ cup) weak (soft) wheat flour
1 teaspoon finely ground cardamom seeds
2 eggs
75 g/2¾ oz (⅓ cup) sugar

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6.

Combine the milk and salt in a pot and bring to the boil over a medium heat. As soon as it boils, whisk in the semolina, making sure that no lumps form, then simmer for about 5 minutes, until thickened. Remove the pot from the heat and leave it to cool to room temperature, stirring occasionally. I like to place a sheet of clingfilm (plastic wrap) on the surface of the batter as it cools to prevent a thick skin from forming.

Once the batter has cooled, fold in the flour and cardamom.

In a separate bowl, whisk the eggs and sugar together until pale and creamy, then fold them into the batter too. Pour the batter into an ovenproof dish to a depth of about 3 cm/1¼ inches. Bake for 35–40 minutes, until the pancake is golden and fully set.

KING GUSTAV ADOLF'S PASTRY

Gustav Adolfsbakelse (Sweden)

This is a really weird pastry. There is absolutely no consensus on how to make it or what it should contain. Every bakery, city, region and even person seems to have a different opinion on the matter, a rare thing in a fundamentally conformist country like Sweden. The tradition of eating a pastry on the 6th of November to commemorate the death of King Gustav Adolf, however, is most commonly respected along the Swedish west coast, the epicentre of this custom being Gothenburg, a city founded by the late king himself. In some parts of Finland the 6th of November is also celebrated as Sweden day, at least by the Swedish-speaking Finns. I believe that they too celebrate, in part, with a pastry. It seems to me that the only thing all these different pastries have in common is that they used to be served with the face of the dead king on top of them, made with chocolate or marzipan. Today, not even that is true. In 2003 a competition was held to decide, once and for all, on the superior recipe of *Gustav Adolfsbakelse*. The jury picked a very modern recipe made with elder blossoms and blackcurrants and a chocolate crown. This is the recipe that I have supplied below.

Preparation and cooking time: 2 hours
Resting time: at least 6 hours
Makes: 8 pastries

For the sponge
3 eggs
140 g/4¾ oz (¾ cup) sugar
50 g/2 oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) weak (soft) wheat flour
50 g/2 oz (⅓ cup) potato starch
1½ teaspoons baking powder

For the elderberry cream
60 g/2¼ oz (½ stick) butter, melted
1 egg
50 g/2 oz (¼ cup) sugar
2 teaspoons plain (all-purpose) flour
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) elderberry cordial
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) cream, whipped

For the blackcurrant cream
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup) blackcurrant marmalade
75 g/2¾ oz (⅓ cup) Quark
25 g/1 oz (2 tablespoons) crème fraîche
25 g/1 oz (2½ tablespoons) sugar
1.9 g/0.07 oz gelatine (pages 76–8)
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) cream, whipped

For the red topping
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup) raspberry jam (pages 510–11)
1 g/0.04 oz gelatine (pages 76–8)

For the chocolate triangles
250 g/9 oz dark (semisweet) chocolate, tempered (pages 78–83) and cut into triangles just before it sets

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and line a baking sheet with baking (parchment) paper.

To make the sponge, place the eggs and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat until pale and fluffy. Mix the dry ingredients in a separate bowl and add them to the egg and sugar mixture. Mix until just combined. Spread the batter onto the prepared baking sheet and bake for 5 minutes. Remove from oven and leave to cool down at room temperature.

When the sponge is cold, use a round 5-cm/2-inch cookie cutter to cut out 16 circles.

Make the elderberry cream by mixing all of the ingredients, except the cream, together in a small pan over a low heat, stirring all the time, until the cream thickens. Remove from the pan and transfer to a bowl and place it in the refrigerator to cool down. Once cool, mix it carefully with the whipped cream until fully combined.

Make the blackcurrant cream by mixing all of the ingredients, except the gelatine and whipped cream, together in a bowl. Melt the gelatine and stir it into the cream until fully combined. Add the whipped cream.

Make the red topping by mixing the jam and gelatine together in a bowl.

To assemble these pastries, use 8 drinking glasses with straight edges, covered on the inside with clingfilm (plastic wrap). Start by placing one piece of sponge in the bottom of each glass. Add the elderberry cream, then one more sponge and then the blackcurrant cream. Leave to rest in the refrigerator for at least 6 hours, or overnight.

Carefully remove the pastries from the glasses and pour a little of the raspberry topping on top of the pastries.

Place 3 chocolate triangles around each pastry, creating the shape of a crown.

MERINGUES, CREAM AND CHOCOLATE SAUCE

Marängsviss / Hovdessert (Sweden)

This dish has been documented as a festive dessert in Sweden since the late nineteenth century. Its name, *marängsviss*, comes from the French name for a meringue cooked over a *bain marie* (water bath), *meringue Suisse* (Swiss meringue) – although today it has nothing to do with that type of meringue.

Marängsviss is traditionally served as is, but in more recent recipes often with banana or other fruit and ice cream. If served with almond flakes and fresh berries the dish is called *hovdessert*, which means 'dessert for the royal court'.

Preparation time: 10 minutes
Serves: 4

300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) cream
½ quantity Meringue (page 355), baked dry in small pieces or a larger piece, crushed
1 quantity Chocolate Sauce (page 534)

In a large bowl, whip the cream to soft peaks.

To assemble the dessert, layer the meringues and cream on a serving platter in a mound and drizzle generously with chocolate sauce.

APPLE MERINGUE PUDDING

Äppelmaräng (Sweden)

This is a dessert that I had never heard of before starting to do research for *The Nordic Cookbook*. It turns out that it's quite common, but I believe that it's more of a southern Swedish thing. It either refers to apple compote in a ramekin (a large one to share or small individual ones) covered in meringue, or apple compote over a sponge cake covered in meringue. The recipe below is just for the apple meringue part. If you want to make it with a sponge cake base, simply pick a recipe from pages 404–5, put the cake batter into one large or 10 small ramekins (buttered and coated with breadcrumbs), top with the apple compote and bake according to the instructions for your chosen sponge cake. Proceed by covering with the meringue as described below.

Preparation and cooking time: 45 minutes
Serves: 6 (10 if you add the sponge base)

1 quantity Apple Compote (page 523)
Vanilla Ice Cream (page 534), to serve

For the meringue
3 egg whites
140 g/4¾ oz (¾ cup) sugar, plus 1 tablespoon
  for whisking
1 teaspoon lemon juice

Pour the apple compote into 6 small individual baking dishes or 1 large baking dish and leave to cool down at room temperature while you make the meringue.

Place the egg whites, 1 tablespoon of the sugar and the lemon juice in the bowl of a stand mixer and whisk into a firm white foam.

Bring 80 ml/2¾ fl oz (¼ cup plus 1½ tablespoons) water and the 140 g/4¾ oz (¾ cup) sugar to the boil in a pan and boil until it reaches 122°C/252°F on a digital food thermometer.

Preheat the oven to 250°C/480°F/Gas Mark 9.

Keep whisking the egg mixture while you slowly add the warm syrup, little by little. Keep whisking for about 10 minutes, or until the meringue has cooled down. Spoon the meringue into a piping (pastry) bag and use it to cover the apples completely. If you don't have a piping bag you can just spread the meringue on top, using a spatula.

Bake for about 5 minutes, or until the meringue has a nice colour. Leave it to cool down a little before serving with vanilla ice cream.

RAW EGGS AND SUGAR

Eggedosis (Norway)
Söt äggröra (Sweden)

This simple dessert or sweet snack is something I have really only seen in Sweden and Norway, but it is possible that it exists also in the other Nordic countries. When I was growing up, my sister and I used to get a coffee cup, each containing two yolks and two teaspoons of sugar, plus the actual spoon. Then you had to beat the mixture in the cup with the spoon until it was just right. I liked it to be pretty fluffy but to still have little grains of undissolved sugar that crunched between my teeth.

Sometimes this preparation is served with fresh berries or some jam. It can also be dusted with cocoa powder. I have never been a fan of the berry or cocoa variations, but prefer my eggs and sugar in a more ascetic and pure fashion, straight up.

The relationship between the egg white and egg yolk depends on how fluffy/rich you want it to be: the more egg white you use the lighter the result, and vice versa with the egg yolk. The more white you add, the more sugar you'll also need, since the volume increases with the amount of white.

Preparation and cooking time: 5 minutes
Serves: 4

8 egg yolks
3 egg whites
5½ tablespoons sugar

Whisk the egg yolks, egg whites and sugar together in a bowl until fluffy and serve immediately.

STRAWBERRIES AND CREAM

Jordbær med fløde (Denmark)
Jordgubbar med grädde (Sweden)

The further north you go in the world, the more people cherish the short moments where an abundance of summer fruit is available to them.

Few things are so instinctively delicious as strawberries and dairy. I like to eat my strawberries in a big bowl. They should never have been refrigerated; something odd happens to their vibrant aroma when they are chilled. I pour equal parts of cream and milk over them and then add a couple of spoonfuls of sugar. I like the sugar, not because the berries aren't sweet and tasty, but because of its crunch between my teeth when I eat it. Some people eat their strawberries like me, but with only cream or only milk, and others want them with whipped cream.

DANISH BERRY DESSERT WITH CREAM

Rødgrød med fløde (Denmark)

A Berry Compote (page 524) thickened with a little bit of potato starch and served warm or cold, with a generous drizzle of cream, is one of the most iconic and common Danish desserts.

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Serves: 4

500–700 g/1 lb 2 oz–1 lb 8½ oz (3–4 cups)
  raspberries, blueberries or strawberries,
  rinsed, cut and hulled if necessary
sugar, to taste
2–3 tablespoons potato starch
cream, to serve

Put three-quarters of the berries in a large pan and pour in 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) water. Bring to a simmer over a medium heat, then stir in sugar, to taste.

In a small bowl, mix the potato starch to a paste with a couple of tablespoons of water. Stir it into the compote and return to a simmer for a couple of minutes. Add the rest of the berries, then remove the pan from the heat.

NORWEGIAN LAYERED APPLE DESSERT

Tilslørte bondepiker (Norway)

The name in Norwegian, *Tilslørte bondepiker*, means 'veiled peasant girls' and this dessert was at its most popular before ice cream became common. It is most often made with Apple Compote (page 523) today, but in older recipes other orchard fruits, like pears and plums, seem to have been used.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Serves: 4

3 tablespoons butter
3 tablespoons sugar
good pinch of salt
6 tablespoons breadcrumbs or rusk crumbs
1 teaspoon ground cassia cinnamon
400 g/14 oz (1⅔ cups) Apple Compote
  (page 523)
400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) cream

Heat the butter, sugar and a good pinch of salt in a pan over a medium heat. When the sugar has dissolved and the mixture is golden, add the breadcrumbs and cinnamon. Continue cooking, stirring from time to time, until the mixture caramelizes to a deep brown and smells delicious. Tip out onto a baking sheet to cool a little.

Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, whip the cream to soft peaks.

Serve in a bowl or 4 individual glasses. Spoon in layers of the apple compote, the whipped cream and the caramelized breadcrumbs, finishing with a layer of whipped cream.

DANISH APPLE TRIFLE

Gammeldags æblekage (Denmark)

The Danish name for this dessert means 'old-fashioned apple cake', although I would say that it is more of a trifle, with its layers of apple compote, cream and sweet crumbs. Sometimes the compote is flavoured with vanilla and sometimes the finished dessert is dusted with cinnamon.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Serves: 4

50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) butter
150 g/5 oz (1⅔ cups) breadcrumbs
pinch of salt
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar
50 g/2 oz Almond Cookies (page 329), crushed into little pieces
300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) cream
1 quantity Apple Compote (page 523), cold

Melt the butter in a pan over a medium heat. Add the breadcrumbs, salt and 80 g/3 oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) of the sugar. Toss in the pan and fry until the mixture starts to smell delicious and looks as if it is caramelizing. Stir in the crushed cookies, then tip onto a plate and leave for about 30 minutes to cool to room temperature.

While the crumbs are cooling, whip the cream to soft peaks in a bowl with the remaining sugar.

In a large glass bowl (or 4 individual small bowls), create layers of the apple compote and the sweet crumbs – as many or as few layers as you like. Finish with a thick layer of cream.

NORWEGIAN COFFEE MOUSSE

Kaffefromasj (Norway)

This is a very common dessert in Norway, its origins I have not been able to find out but it has been around for at least a hundred years. I will use this space to instead give you an insight into what a wonderfully direct, smart and descriptive language Norwegian is. If you look at the Norwegian name of this dish and you remove the first part, *kaffe*, which means coffee, then you are left with the other half of the word: *fromasj*, like the French *fromage*, cheese. Something that tastes like coffee and sort of reminds you of a mild and delicate, fluffy cheese… Isn't that an amazing way to describe a dish new to a country in some historical past so that everyone instantly understood what to expect before they decided to make it?! At the same time, anyone seeing the recipe title would be knowingly or unknowingly informed about the presumed origin of the dish by the use of a French word. Sure, this process has happened in other Nordic countries too – my grandmother also called chocolate mousse *chokladfromage* – the difference, though, is that the Norwegians stuck with this ingenious original naming concept unlike the rest of us who, weak in our minds, jumped at any new naming trends, regardless of whether it did the job better or not.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Chilling time: 4–5 hours
Serves: 4

3 eggs
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar
7.6 g/0.28 oz gelatine (pages 76–8)
150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) really strong coffee, or espresso
400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) cream, whipped

Put the eggs and sugar into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat until pale and fluffy.

Place the soaked gelatine leaves in a small pan and heat them carefully over a low heat until they melt. Add the coffee to the melted gelatine and remove from the heat.

Carefully pour the coffee into the egg and sugar mixture and stir gently until combined. Finish by mixing in the whipped cream. Scoop the mixture into serving bowls and keep in the refrigerator for 4–5 hours before serving.

NORWEGIAN LIGHT LINGONBERRY MOUSSE

Trollkrem (Norway)

A very traditional Norwegian dessert, this extremely light and refreshing mousse is often served as it is, with a few fresh lingonberries sprinkled on top, or with an option of vanilla custard.

Preparation time: 5 minutes
Serves: 4

200 g/7 oz (¾ cup plus 1½ tablespoons) lingonberries, fresh or frozen and defrosted, plus extra to serve
85 g/3 oz (⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
1 egg white

Use an electric whisk or a stand mixer to whisk all the ingredients together until thick and creamy.

LINGONBERRY CREAM

Lingongrädde (Sweden)

Whipped cream mixed with Sugared Lingonberries (page 514) can be served with pancakes (pages 224) or waffles (pages 232) or as an accompaniment to Gingerbread Cake (page 427).

Preparation and cooking time: 10 minutes
Serves: 4 as a condiment or dessert

150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) cream
150 ml/5 fl oz (⅔ cup) Sugared Lingonberries (page 514)

Whip the cream to stiff peaks in a bowl and then fold in the sugared lingonberries.

NORWEGIAN CLOUDBERRY CREAM

Multekrem (Norway)

In Norway *multekrem* is often eaten at Christmastime and served with either Norwegian Tuiles (page 352) or Almond Wreath Cake (page 462) as a dessert.

Preparation and cooking time: 5 minutes
Serves: 4

400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups) double (heavy) cream
200 g/7 oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) cloudberry jam (pages 510–11)

Whip the cream to soft peaks in a bowl.

Carefully fold the jam into the cream with a rubber spatula. Some people like it to be completely mixed in, but I like it when there are some streaks of jam and pure cream still in the mixture.

This dessert is best served when it has just been folded, rather than being left to sit in the refrigerator.

ICELANDIC CHOCOLATE SOUP

Kakósúpa (Iceland)

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 1.3 litres/44 fl oz (5¼ cups)

2 tablespoons cocoa powder
3 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon potato starch
1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) milk
pinch of salt
whipped cream, to serve

Mix 250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) water, the cocoa powder and sugar together in a pan and bring to the boil over a medium heat. Lower the heat and simmer for about 5 minutes.

Mix the potato starch and 100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) cold water together in a small bowl.

Add the milk and salt to the cocoa mix and bring to the boil again. Stir the potato starch mixture into the boiling soup and wait until it boils once more, then remove from the heat. Serve with whipped cream.

ICELANDIC BREAD SOUP

Brauðsúpa (Iceland)

The Danish influence on Icelandic cooking is sometimes very strong. Rye bread was definitely brought here by the Danes and I wonder whether there isn't a connection between this recipe and the Danish *Øllebrød* (page 248). The Icelandic one is made with water rather than beer, which is used in the Danish one, and it is also sweeter. It could be a dessert, but also something you eat as a light meal.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Soaking time: overnight
Serves: 5–6 as a dessert

200 g/7 oz leftover rye bread, or at least half rye and half some other bread
handful of raisins
zest of 1 orange or lemon
1 tablespoon orange marmalade
3 tablespoons sugar
whipped cream, to serve

Place the bread in a bowl and soak it in 1.2 litres/40 fl oz (5 cups) water overnight.

The next day, place the bread and water in a blender and purée until smooth, then pour the mixture into a pan. Bring to the boil over a medium heat, then lower the heat and simmer the soup over a low heat for 1 hour. Add the raisins, orange or lemon zest, marmalade and sugar and cook for another 10 minutes. Serve warm with whipped cream.

JAM, JELLIES AND CORDIALS

Previous page: Autumn (fall) colours in the Scandes, 2017.

This is another of those chapters that one might say should not really be included in a book about baking. I disagree, and therefore the following recipes and methods are included regardless of whether they have seen the inside of an oven or not.

I have two main reasons for including a chapter on making jam, jellies and cordials in this book. The first one is that quite often in the actual baking recipes included in other chapters of *The Nordic Baking Book* we make reference to things in this section, which you (the reader) would, if we didn't include them here, either have to buy or find the recipes for elsewhere, which would be a pity because it would be less good and less fun.

The second reason is that in a part of the world where vitamin C and many other nutrients can be very scarce during a large part of the year, you can just imagine the effect on the culture of eating and cooking that industrialization of sugar production and the discovery of pasteurization have had.

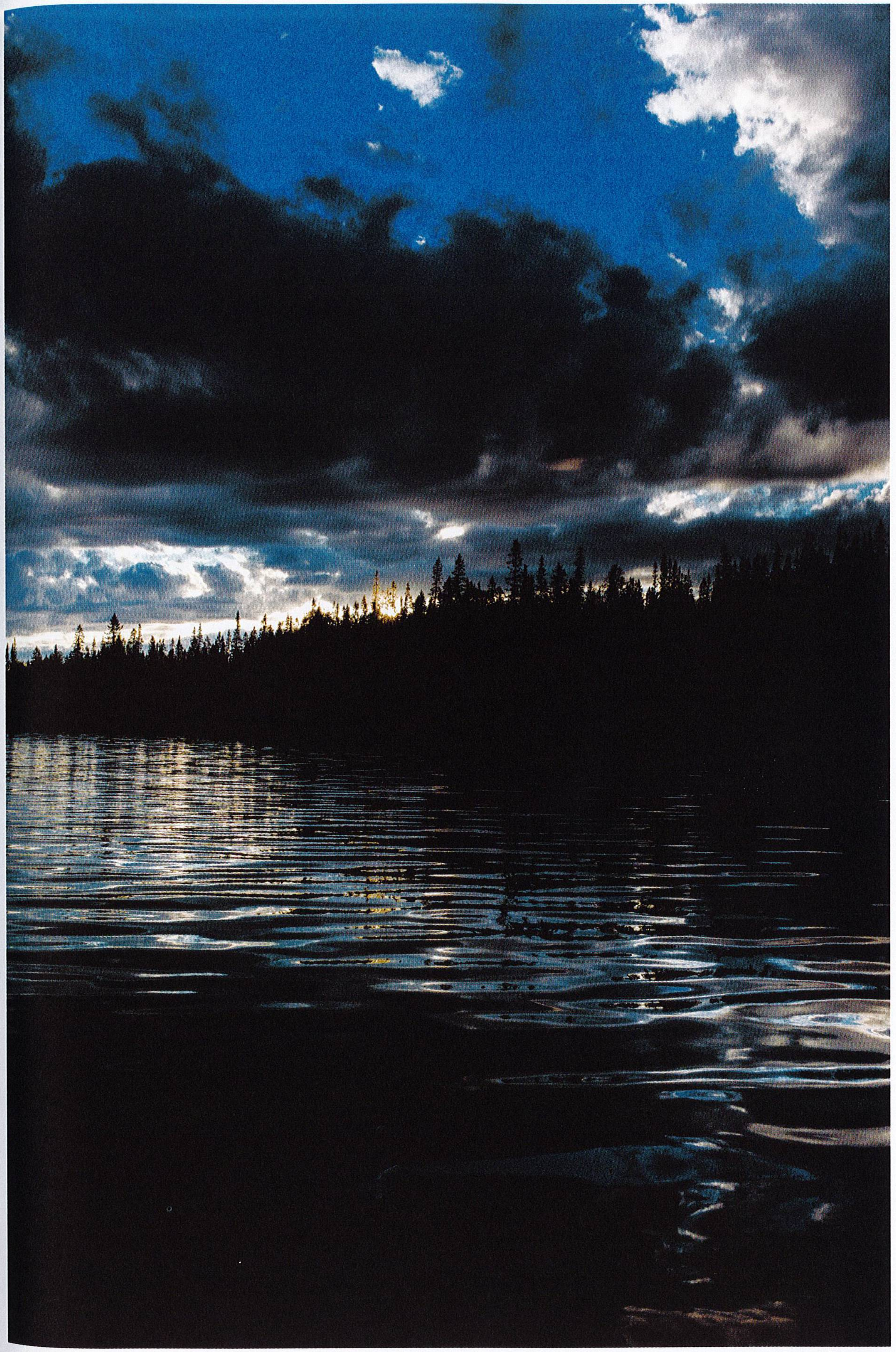
Before sugar was available in larger cheap quantities and before we could heat a closed jar to kill off the microbes in the product within, preservation of fruit was very difficult and probably not practised much.

It is easy to imagine that people have been eating berries in large quantities all year round since forever, but that is simply not the case. Up until the two factors mentioned above and the time of modern transportation, the joy of eating fruits and berries was largely and with few exceptions a pleasure enjoyed during the short blink of time in summer when these products were naturally ripe and good to eat and before they spoiled.

I think that this might be one important reason (among others) as to why the preparation of berries and fruit during late summer is still such a beloved and cherished part of Nordic cooking, even though most of us could probably, and do actually, get most of our nutritional needs covered by imported crops through the dark parts of the year.

How we like to eat today is coloured so much more by how we had to eat before than people realize.

Opposite: Midnight, summer solstice, Ånn, Sweden 2017.



JAM

Making jam is one of the best ways of preserving fruits. What preserves a jam and keeps it from spoiling is, firstly, that you kill off many unwanted bacteria and microbes with the actual cooking process and that you are able to keep them out by the way you store it. The sugar in jam also reduces the amount of bacteria available to microbes – making it difficult for them to live and multiply, even if they are present in the jam despite the cooking.

A lot of people today see jam as being too sweet and unhealthy. I think this is a real misconception. Jam needs to be a bit sweet in order to keep and to best preserve the character of the fruit used. Yes, it contains a lot of sugar, but then eat less of it. When you do eat it though, eat a proper homemade one, full of flavour from a distant summer.

When people try to cut down on the amount of sugar in jam, most of the time they have to boil the jam longer to make it set and behave the way they want. This only really means that less fruit makes less jam and the end result is as sweet as if you had added more sugar to start with because you boil away more liquid. As the liquid boils, so do a lot of the aromatics that you want to keep within the jam itself.

To me the actual setting of the jam is relatively unimportant; some jams set easily and others don't. All fruits and berries contain different amounts of pectin, and that's just how it is. I focus on how to preserve as much of the flavour, colour and vibrancy of the fruit itself as possible, rather than trying to obtain a thick, marmalade-like texture.

To set jams made from fruit containing very little natural pectin, the usual solution is to add refined pectin to the mixture. I don't do this. If you are using fruit such as raspberries, which do not set naturally, leave it soft and runny; it will be delicious anyway. The amount of sugar in old recipes, though, is sometimes crazily high and will leave fruits lacking in acid overwhelmingly sweet.

In the old days, when people didn't understand hygiene as well as we do today, sugar was a way of ensuring that their jam didn't go bad. Today it's a bit unnecessary. Carefully following the cooking process described below and by either pasteurizing or sterilizing the finished jars (if you use glass ones) the jam keeps for a really long time anyhow. If you don't want to pasteurize your jam because it seems difficult, don't. Instead, freeze it in suitable containers and take them out one by one as you need them.

A lot of people like to add benzoic acid to keep their jams from going mouldy. I think this is really unnecessary; properly made, it doesn't most of the time.

Lastly, do not cook the jam for too long. Often I see recipes where we are told to cook the jam until it reaches a certain temperature, indicating that it is concentrated enough to set. For every minute longer than necessary that you cook your fruit, the more freshness and primary aroma they will lose. I prefer a jam that tastes vibrantly of the fruit its made from but which is a bit runny over one that is cooked for too long and dull tasting but set.

Choose perfectly ripe, soft fruit with a good amount of acidity in it.

Preparation and cooking time: depends on the size of jars used
Makes: about 1.5 kg/3¼ lb jam

1 kg/2¼ lb soft fruit (such as raspberries, blueberries, cherries or really almost any other soft fruit)
650 g/1 lb 7 oz (3¼ cups) sugar

Place the fruit in a large pot and add a few spoonfuls of the sugar. Leave it to sit until the sugar has dissolved and started to extract the juice from the fruit.

Once a layer of sweet fruit juice has formed in the bottom of the pot, bring it to the boil over gentle heat. Stir it carefully from time to time to ensure that it doesn't burn at the bottom.

When the fruit is perfectly cooked (soft but not completely disintegrated), add the remaining sugar and bring to the boil once more. Skim off any froth that accumulates on the surface during this stage of the cooking.

Preheat a steam oven to 100°C/212°F/Gas Mark ½ and place a thermometer in the centre of the oven. Sterilize equal-sized glass jars and their lids. Wearing oven gloves, carefully ladle the jam into hot sterilized jars, leaving a 1-cm/½-inch head space. Screw on the lids loosely, but don't seal the jars tightly. Place the filled jars on a baking sheet and put it in the oven. They will be properly pasteurized when the temperature in the jam reaches 90°C (195°F) and is then maintained at that level for 10 minutes. Check the temperature using a digital thermometer before putting on the lid.

Remove from the oven and seal the lids tightly (wearing oven gloves) and leave them to cool. Store somewhere cool and dark.

JELLIES

Jellies are cooked fruit juices set with the naturally occurring pectin in them. High pectin fruits, like apples, rowan berries, redcurrants and blackcurrants, are most suitable – unless you want to add refined pectin. If you do, you can use any fruit you like and make it set. Do use a portion of under-ripe fruit in the mix when making a jelly, something that often makes the setting part easier. Pour a spoon of jelly onto a chilled plate and check if it sets when it cools down. If not, then cook the jelly for a bit longer. If your jelly doesn't seem to want to set at all, or if you are using fruits low in natural pectin, follow the instructions on a packet of refined fruit pectin.

I never add benzoic acid or other preservatives to my jellies. I think it is quite unnecessary as jellies are naturally very high in sugar and keep well in any case if you pour the very hot syrup into a sterilized glass jar – or even better, if you pasteurize the jars after filling them (see above).

How much juice any given fruit renders is difficult to say, and I have chosen to write this recipe in a way that accommodates this.

Cut any larger, tougher fruits into small pieces first, then weigh and place in a pot. Add 100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) water for every 1 kg/2¼ lb of fruit. Bring to a slow boil and cook for about 30 minutes, or until the fruits are completely soft. It will take a little time and you shouldn't rush the process. You need a combination of heat and time to dissolve the pectin into the juice of the fruit, which is essential for it to set.

Ladle the cooked fruit into a sieve (strainer) lined with muslin (cheesecloth) set over a large container. Leave to sit for a good 30 minutes so that as much juice as possible can drain from the fruit by gravity alone. Once again, do not rush.

Discard the pulp. Measure the juice and pour it into a new pot. Weigh out 750 g/1 lb 10 oz (3¾ cups) sugar for every litre of juice. Bring the juice to the boil and add the sugar. Return to the boil. With high pectin fruits the jelly will set almost immediately after this first boil but sometimes you have to continue simmering for a bit longer, testing every 5 minutes or so to check if it will set.

Sterilize glass jars and their lids. If pasteurizing, preheat a steam oven to 100°C/200°F/Gas Mark ½ and then place a thermometer in the centre of the oven.

Carefully ladle the hot liquid jelly into the sterilized jars, leaving a 1-cm/½-inch head space. If you are not pasteurizing, screw the lids on tightly and store the jars somewhere cool and dark. Otherwise, screw on the lids loosely, place the filled jars on a baking sheet and put them in the oven. They will be properly pasteurized when the temperature in the jelly reaches 90°C (195°F) and is then maintained at that level for 10 minutes.

Remove the jars from the oven and seal the lids tightly (wearing oven gloves) and leave them to cool. Store somewhere cool and dark.

TO MAKE CORDIALS

Mehu (Finland)
Saft (Sweden)
Saftevand (Denmark)

Making cordials is one of the best ways of preserve the abundance of high quality fruits from summer. They have been an important source of vitamins and flavour through the dark Nordic winter season.

You can make your cordials either in a pot on the stove, straining the juice through muslin (cheesecloth), or you can make it in a steam juicer. A steam juicer is very simple to work with and makes very little mess, but produces a less concentrated product than making it in a pot. This is because in recipes where the sugar is added into the steamer along with the berries, the dry sugar will absorb a lot of the steam, diluting the syrup more than necessary.

Myself, I like to combine the two methods, making the juice in a steamer but boiling it in pot with sugar. I just think straining the cooked berries the old-fashioned way is unnecessarily messy, and I prefer the convenience of the steam juicer. My way is a little less messy than the more traditional way and it produces a more concentrated result than using the steam juicer alone does.

A lot of people add preservatives to their syrups; I think this is quite unnecessary. Make sure you maintain a good standard of hygiene throughout the preparation process, do not lower the amount of sugar and store your cordials in the refrigerator, and you are going to be fine. Alternatively, pasteurize the filled bottles. If you do this you will be able to keep them at room temperature for a really long time.

Oh, and ideally use only glass bottles. You can use plastic jars or bottles, but then it is better to freeze them for storage.

The glass bottles should be really clean and both them and the corks or caps are best boiled – or steamed if you have a steam oven – just before bottling, so that the bottles are still hot when the syrup goes into them. This is good because it kills most microbes, but also prevents the glass from shattering due to big temperature differences.

The recipes below work with more or less all kinds of soft berries and fruits. The yield can vary by about 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons), depending on the variety and quality of the berries used.

You will need 500 g/1 lb 2 oz (2½ cups) sugar per 1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) of fruit juice.

For this quantity of berries, about 1.25 kg/2 lb 12 oz (6¼ cups) is about right.

Preparation and cooking time: 1½ hours
Makes: about 3 litres/101 fl oz (12½ cups) cordial

3 kg/6½ lb soft fruits or berries
sugar

IN A POT ON THE STOVE (VERSION 1)

Bring 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) water to the boil in a pot which is large enough to accommodate all of the berries. Once the water boils, add the berries and cover with a lid. Boil for 10–15 minutes until the berries look cooked and shrivelled. While they are boiling, stir once or twice so that the fruit cooks evenly. Don't stir more than this, however, as you don't want to crush the fruit unnecessarily; it will make the straining process slower and harder if there are a lot of small particles floating around in the juice.

Ladle into a large sieve (strainer), lined with muslin (cheesecloth) set over a large container, and leave the juices to drain through by gravity alone for 1 hour.

Meanwhile, clean the pot. Once the cooked berries have drained, measure the resulting juice and return it to the pot. Weigh out the required amount of sugar (see above) and add it to the pot. Bring to the boil, then lower the heat and simmer for 5 minutes, skimming the surface thoroughly every now and then.

Carefully transfer to hot sterilized bottles using a ladle and a funnel. Seal the bottles and leave to cool.

IN A STEAM JUICER (VERSION 2)

Put the fruit and 1.25 kg/2 lb 12 oz (6¼ cups) sugar into the fruit compartment of your steam juicer. Fill the bottom section with water. Assemble the steamer by sitting the fruit compartment on top of the part that collects the juice and position them both on top of the bottom section. Put on the lid and make sure that the hose that drains from the juice reservoir is clamped off.

Turn the heat up to medium and wait for steam to form. It's important to ensure that there is always water in the bottom section during the steaming process. Steam for about 45 minutes, or until the berries have cooked and released their juice.

Carefully unclamp the hose and drain the fruit syrup straight into hot sterilized bottles. Seal the bottles and leave to cool.

MAGNUS'S WAY (VERSION 3)

Follow the instructions for steaming, but don't add any sugar to the berries. Once they've yielded all their juice, instead of bottling it, measure it out, then transfer it to a large pot.

Weigh out the required amount of sugar (see opposite) and add it to the pot. Bring to the boil, lower the heat and simmer for 5 minutes, skimming the surface thoroughly every now and then.

Now comes the clever part; instead of fiddling with a ladle and funnel, disassemble your steam juicer and pour the syrup into the juice reservoir. Now you can carefully unclamp the hose and drain the fruit syrup straight into hot sterilized bottles. Seal the bottles and leave to cool.

ELDERFLOWER CORDIAL

Hylleblomstsaft (Norway)
Seljankukkamehu (Finland)
Hyldeblomstsaft (Denmark)
Fläderblomssaft (Sweden)

There are few things that make me feel more like summer than a glass of elderflower cordial. The perfumed blossoms infused into a sugar syrup can be diluted with water, still or sparkling, something more boozy to make a cocktail or just drizzled over sponge cakes, pies or ice cream as a dessert. It is tempting to add more flowers than the recipe below, but don't do that, as it will just taste like old ladies' perfume.

Because it isn't really boiled and bottled like a cordial made from berries (see left) this recipe doesn't keep very well. Some people add sodium benzoate to preserve it, but I prefer to pour it into those plastic bags that make ice cubes. It keeps forever in the freezer and you can just pop a few cubes in a glass of water whenever you want a taste of summer. This very common recipe says three lemons and 50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) citric acid, but I usually add the juice from ten lemons and skip the citric acid. However, I only add the rinds from three so it is not too heavy on the lemon aroma.

Preparation and cooking time: 3 days
Makes: 3 litres/101 fl oz (12½ cups)
concentrated cordial, which dilutes to about
12 litres/406 fl oz (12.7 quarts) with water
as a drink

1.5 kg/3¼ lb (7½ cups) sugar
40 bunches elderflower blossoms, very fresh, straight from the tree
3 lemons, sliced
50 g/2 oz (3½ tablespoons) citric acid, or the juice of 7 lemons

Add the sugar and 2 litres/68 fl oz (8½ cups) water to a large pot and bring to the boil. Simmer until the sugar has completely dissolved.

Put the elderflowers and all the lemon slices into a stainless steel bowl and pour the hot sugar syrup over them. Add the citric acid, if using. Stir well and leave to cool before covering and refrigerating. Leave in the refrigerator for 3 days before adding the lemon juice if you didn't add the citric acid. As soon as you've added the lemon juice, if using, strain the syrup through a fine-mesh sieve.

CORDIAL SOUP

Saftsuppe (Denmark)
Saftsuppe (Norway)
Mehukeitto (Finland)
Saftsoppa (Sweden)

Cordial soups are often served as warm or cold snacks or as dessert. I remember growing up, that when we went for an outing with school, my parents often packed a thermos of warm cordial soup in my backpack.

Cordial soups can be accompanied by things like some Almond Cookies (page 329), Sweet Rusks (page 195), whipped cream or Vanilla Ice Cream (page 534), pieces of fruit or berries, or even cottage cheese. Sometimes cordial soups are themselves served as a condiment with Rice Porridge (page 242) or Rice Pudding (page 488).

In Norway, a variation of this soup is made with rolled oats or pearl barley (see below).

Any cordial can be used, but the ones made from red fruits are preferred.

Preparation and cooking time: 10 minutes
Makes: 1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups)

1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) cordial, made with water to the level of sweetness and concentration desired
2 tablespoons potato starch
sugar, to taste

Mix all the ingredients together in a pot and bring to the boil over a medium heat. Once it boils, pour through a sieve (strainer) to remove any lumps of starch from the finished soup.

CORDIAL SOUP WITH OATS OR BARLEY

Saftsuppe med havregryn / bygg (Norway)

Preparation and cooking time: 10 minutes
Makes: 1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups)

1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) cordial, made with water to the level of sweetness and concentration desired
100 g/3½ oz (1 cup plus 3 tablespoons) rolled oats or (½ cup) pearl barley
sugar, to taste

Mix all the ingredients together in a pot and bring to the boil over a medium heat. Simmer for a few minutes until the grains have become soft and the soup has thickened.

SUGARED CLOUDBERRIES

Rårörda Hjortron (Sweden)

You can use fresh or frozen berries, it makes no difference to the end result.

Preparation time: 5 minutes
Resting time: overnight
Makes: 650–700 g/1 lb 7 oz–1 lb 8½ oz

500 g/1 lb 2 oz (5 cups) cloudberries
150–200 g/5–7 oz (¾–1 cup) sugar

Put the berries and sugar in a bowl and stir with a spoon. Keep the bowl at room temperature and stir from time to time, until the sugar has dissolved. It shouldn't take longer than overnight. Refrigerate when done.

SUGARED LINGONBERRIES

Rårörda lingon (Sweden)

Lingonberries contain a lot of naturally occurring benzoic acid, something that industry adds to many preserves and jams to help them keep. The levels are so high that lingonberries just don't go bad. Thanks to this, there is really no point in boiling them into jam and bottling them; you can just add some sugar for flavour and they will keep in a fairly clean jar at the back of your refrigerator for years. You can use fresh or frozen berries. It makes no difference to the end result.

Especially in northern Scandinavia and Finland, we eat sugared lingonberries on so many things, sweet and savoury. They all seem to benefit from a scoop of sweet and astringent ruby loveliness.

You can use this technique with virtually any soft fruit or berry (we often use cloudberries, raspberries or blueberries). It will be delicious but it won't keep for as long because these fruits contain less benzoic acid than the lingonberries, so don't make too much at a time and eat it within a couple of days. Or freeze it, which will keep it fresh for a considerable amount of time.

Preparation and cooking time: 5 minutes
Resting time: at least overnight
Makes: 650–700 g/1 lb 7 oz–1 lb 8½ oz

500 g/1 lb 2 oz (5 cups) lingonberries
150–200 g/5–7 oz (¾–1 cup) sugar

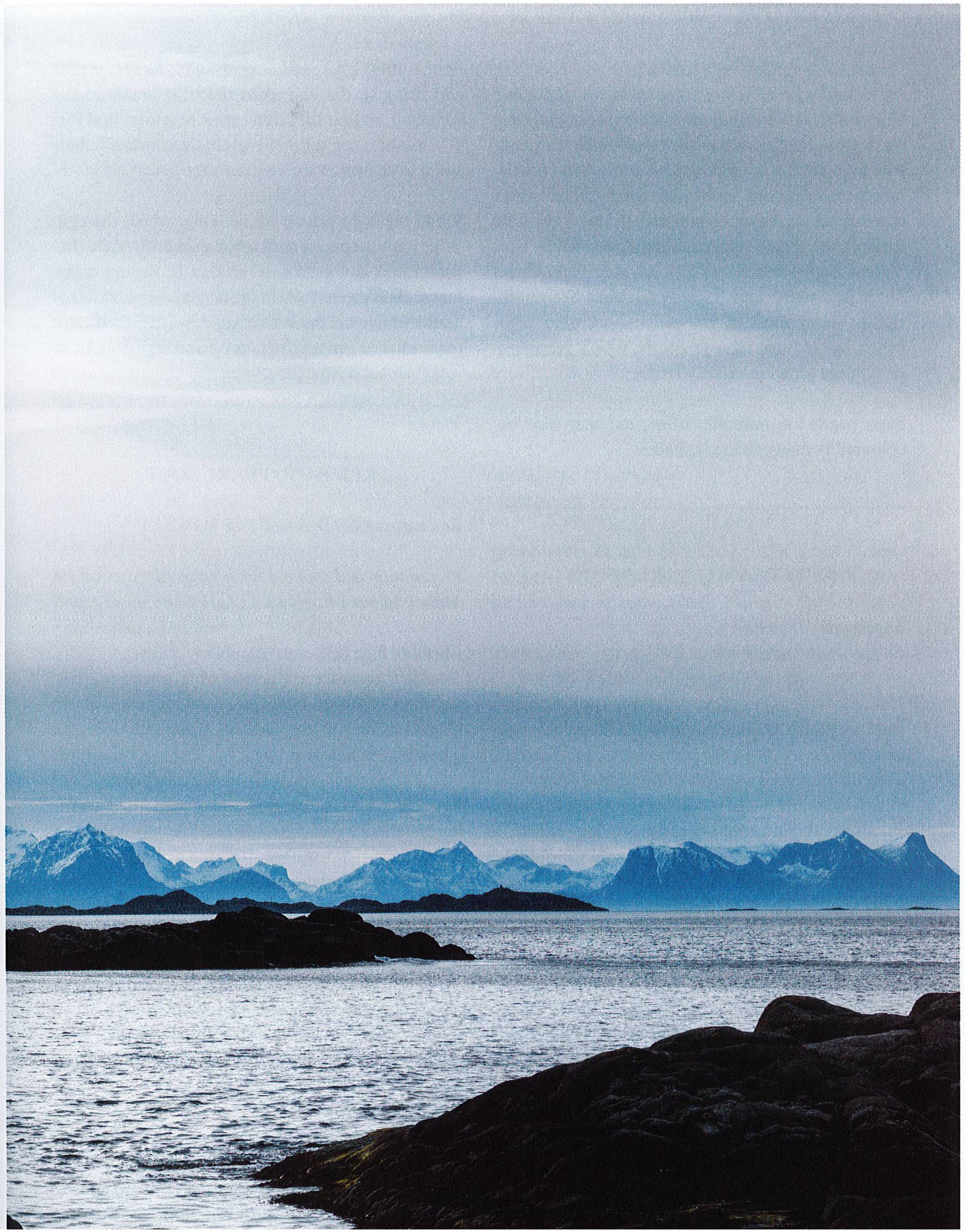
Place the lingonberries and sugar in a large bowl and mix with a spoon. Keep the bowl at room temperature and stir from time to time, until the sugar has dissolved. It should take a while for this to happen, at least overnight. Refrigerate when done.

LINGONBERRIES PRESERVED IN WATER

Vattlingon (Sweden)

In Sweden, lingonberries are a very important garnish for many of the *husmanskost* (simple, local and traditional) dishes. Due to a very high level of natural benzoic acid, they rarely go bad, but stay fresh for a long time. Just put the berries in a sterilized glass bottle and cover them with water, put a cork in and put them in your cellar, and they will keep for a year. Strictly speaking they do not ferment because of the high levels of benzoates, and the changes in the jar are due to enzymes, not the activity of yeast or other microorganisms. The result has the same slightly mealy texture as fresh lingonberries and tickles your tongue a bit like buttermilk. In Jämtland, where I live, they are often enjoyed fermented as a festive dessert with thick cream and icing (confectioners') sugar.

SWEET SOUPS AND COMPOTES



SAGO PEARLS

Sago pearls are small (3 mm/⅛ inch) round grains made from starch derived from the Southeast Asian true sago palm tree (*Metroxylon sagu*). Sago pearls have been important and widely used in the Nordic countries since the mid-eighteenth century. The traditional use was to thicken mainly sweet soups like Yellow Sago Pearl Soup (below), Red Sago Pearl Soup (see right) and Sago Pearl Milk Soup (see right). Today most of the recipes that used sago pearls instead use tapioca pearls, which are more commonly found in grocery stores.

Sago pearls are naturally white, but may also be coloured in many different shades.

SWEET SAGO PEARL SOUPS

Sagosuppe (Denmark)
Sagogrynssoppa (Sweden)

Not seen very often these days, sweet soups thickened with sago pearls used to be commonly served as a popular snack in the afternoon or as a dessert. They can be served warm or cold and they often have raisins or prunes mixed into them just before serving.

I like to cook my sago pearls so that they are still a little bit uncooked in the centre. This makes them look kind of like little frogs' eggs and provides a bit more texture than if you boil them all soft.

YELLOW SAGO PEARL SOUP

Gul sagosuppe (Denmark)

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Makes: about 1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups)

50 g/2 oz (½ cup) sago pearls
4 egg yolks
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar
juice and finely grated zest of 1 lemon
2 tablespoons good dark rum
1 handful raisins or prunes

Pour 1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) water into a large pot and bring to the boil. Add the sago pearls while whisking, so that they don't stick together. Boil for 5–7 minutes, or until the grains are cooked, but still a little firm in the centre.

While the sago pearls are cooking, whisk the egg yolks with the sugar until white and fluffy. Add the lemon juice and zest and the rum to the egg mixture and mix well. Pour in the hot sago and cooking liquid which will have thickened a little, then add the raisins or prunes to the soup and serve.

RED SAGO PEARL SOUP

Rød sagosuppe (Denmark)

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Makes: about 1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups)

1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) raspberry cordial, made with water to the level of sweetness and concentration desired
50 g/2 oz (½ cup) sago pearls
1 handful raisins or prunes

Pour the raspberry cordial into a pot and bring to the boil. Add the sago pearls while whisking, so they don't stick together. Boil for 5–7 minutes, or until the grains are cooked, but still a little firm in the centre. Add the raisins or prunes and serve.

SAGO PEARL MILK SOUP

Sagovælling (Denmark)
Sagovälling (Sweden)

In Sweden this recipe in older books is prepared with a piece of vanilla bean to flavour the milk and is served with sugar. In Denmark it is cooked without the vanilla and served with ground cassia cinnamon and sugar, which you sprinkle on top to taste when it is served.

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Makes: about 1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups)

1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) milk
1 teaspoon sugar, plus extra to serve
small pinch of salt
⅓ vanilla bean (optional)
80 g/3 oz (¾ cup) sago pearls

Combine the milk, sugar and salt in a large pot, add the piece of vanilla bean, if using, and bring to the boil. Add the sago pearls while whisking, so that they don't stick together. Boil for 5–7 minutes, or until the grains are cooked, but still a little firm in the centre. Serve immediately, sprinkled with extra sugar and cassia cinnamon, if using.

SOUP OF DRIED FRUITS

Mehukeitto (Finland)
Frugt Suppe (Denmark)
Fruktsoppa (Sweden)

Serve warm or cold as a dessert or a snack between meals. Flavour with a stick of cassia cinnamon, some vanilla, cardamom or grated lemon zest if you want to.

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Soaking time: at least 3 hours, but preferably overnight
Serves: 4

250 g/9 oz (1¼ cups) mixed dried fruit (choose from dried apple, raisins, prunes, apricot or any other dried fruit)
1 cassia cinnamon stick, 1–2 vanilla beans, 2–3 cardamom pods, or the zest of 1 lemon (optional)
sugar, to taste
1 tablespoon potato starch
juice of 1 lemon juice, to taste

Soak the dried fruit in 1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) water for at least 3 hours, but preferably overnight. If any of the fruits have swollen into dimensions too large to eat in one piece, then cut them into smaller pieces and return them to the soaking liquid.

Transfer the fruit and soaking liquid to a large pot and add your choice of spiced flavourings as they will need to simmer with the fruit for a bit. Taste and adjust the sweetness to your liking with a little sugar. Bring everything to a simmer over a medium heat and cook for about 5 minutes.

In a small bowl, mix the potato starch with a couple of tablespoons of cold water, then stir it into the fruit soup. Return to the boil and cook until it thickens, then add lemon juice and the grated lemon zest, if using, to taste.

APPLE SOUP

Æblesuppe (Denmark)
Äppelsoppa (Sweden)

Serve warm or cold as a dessert or a snack. Some recipes I have read include a piece of cassia cinnamon stick or some vanilla beans as flavourings.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Serves: 4

4 crisp apples with plenty of acidity, peeled, halved and cored
1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) fresh apple juice
80 g/3 oz (⅔ cup) raisins
1 cassia cinnamon stick or 1–2 vanilla beans (optional)
sugar, to taste
2 tablespoons potato starch
lemon juice, to taste

Cut each apple half into about 6 thin wedges.

Combine the apple juice and raisins in a large pot and add your choice of cinnamon stick or vanilla beans, if using. Bring to the boil, then taste and adjust the sweetness to your liking with a little sugar. Add the apple wedges to the pot and simmer for about 15 minutes, or until they start to soften.

In a small bowl, mix the potato starch with a couple of tablespoons of cold water, then stir it into the apple soup. Return to the boil, then taste again and adjust the sweet-sour balance with more sugar or lemon juice, to taste.

RHUBARB SOUP

Rabarbrasuppe (Norway)
Raparperikeitto (Finland)
Rabarbersuppe (Denmark)
Rabarbersoppa (Sweden)

Enjoy warm or cold for dessert or as a light snack with a dollop of whipped cream or Vanilla Ice Cream (page 534) and a handful of Almond Cookies (page 329) or Sweet Rusks (page 195).

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Serves: 4

500 g/1 lb 2 oz (4–6 sticks) rhubarb, chopped
sugar, to taste
2–3 tablespoons potato starch

Bring 700 ml/24 fl oz (3 cups) water to the boil in a pot over a medium heat. Add the rhubarb and cook until it is tender, then stir in sugar, to taste. How much the rhubarb will break down depends on how young and tender the sticks are to begin with.

In a small bowl, mix the potato starch with a couple of tablespoons of cold water. Stir it into the soup and return to a simmer. Take off the heat. Serve warm or leave to cool completely.

GOOSEBERRY SOUP

Stikkelsbærsuppe (Denmark)
Krusbärssoppa (Sweden)

Enjoy warm or cold for dessert or as a light snack with a dollop of whipped cream or Vanilla Ice Cream (page 534) and a handful of Almond Cookies (page 329) or Sweet Rusks (page 195).

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Serves: 4

680 g/1 lb 8 oz (4¼ cups) fresh gooseberries
sugar, to taste
2–3 tablespoons potato starch

Bring 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) of water to the boil in a pot over a medium heat. Add the gooseberries and cook until they are soft. They should not be raw, but rather, they should burst open a little and be warm all the way through.

Stir in the sugar. You will need more if the gooseberries are tart and less if they are sweet and ripe.

In a small bowl, mix the potato starch with a couple of tablespoons of water. Stir it into the soup and return to a simmer. Take off the heat and serve immediately or leave to cool for later.

SWEET BLUEBERRY OR BILBERRY SOUP

Blåbærsuppe (Norway)
Mustikkakeitto (Finland)
Blåbærsuppe (Denmark)
Blåbärssoppa (Sweden)

Blueberry soup is very commonly drunk in the wintertime from a Thermos when you are out skiing. You can either leave the broken, cooked berries as they are in the soup (which I do), mix it with an immersion blender after the cooking stage, or strain them out altogether.

Bilberry soup can be served as a snack, or it could be served with some Almond Cookies (page 329) and a dollop of whipped cream for dessert.

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Serves: 4

750 g/1 lb 10 oz (5 cups) blueberries
  or bilberries, fresh or frozen
80 g/3 oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) sugar,
  plus extra to taste
2 tablespoons potato starch

Place the berries in a large pot with the sugar and pour in 750 ml/25 fl oz (3 cups) water. Bring to a simmer over medium heat and cook for 5 minutes.

In a small bowl, mix the potato starch with a couple of tablespoons of cold water, then stir it into the soup. Return to the boil and cook until it thickens, then taste and adjust the sweetness to your liking with a little sugar.

ROSEHIP SOUP

Nypesuppe (Norway)
Nyponsoppa (Sweden)

I remember, growing up, having this soup – which is very commonly prepared in Sweden from a mix bought in supermarkets – with ice cream and almond cookies as an afternoon snack. I think that almost no one actually makes it themselves from real fruit, which is a pity. It is much more delicious.

The soup can be made from both fresh or dried rosehips but I actually prefer dried ones because I find it is easier to get the right concentration to it. If you happen to have fresh rosehips available, just use twice the amount as dried. Skip the soaking part of the method, discard any leafy/twiggy parts before cooking them, but leave the seeds in. Start with a bit less water to make sure the soup doesn't taste too diluted in the end.

Preparation and cooking time: 20–40 minutes
Soaking time: overnight
Serves: 4

400 g/14 oz (5 cups) dried rosehips
sugar, to taste
squeeze of lemon juice (optional)
1–2 tablespoons potato starch (optional)

Soak the dried rosehips overnight in 1 litre/34 fl oz (4¼ cups) water.

Transfer the rosehips and their soaking liquid to a pot. Bring to a simmer and cook until tender.

Use an immersion blender to purée the soup, or use a sturdy whisk to break up the rosehips. You won't be able to crush the seeds, at least not without breaking your blender. Push the mixture through a fine sieve back into the cleaned-out pot and discard the skins and seeds.

Taste the soup and add sugar to taste and lemon juice if you want a bit of extra freshness. Bring to the boil over medium heat and adjust the thickness of the soup, if you need to, by adding some potato starch mixed with a few tablespoons of cold water.

APPLE COMPOTE

Æblekompot (Denmark)
Äppelkräm (Sweden)

A classic dessert served warm or cold, often in a bowl with milk or cream poured over it. It can be flavoured with cassia cinnamon, cardamom pods or grated lemon zest. The sweet and sour balance is important. If your apples are not tart enough, add a dash of lemon juice towards the end.

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Serves: 4

500 g/1 lb 2 oz peeled, cored and diced
  tart apples
90 g/3¼ oz (⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
cassia cinnamon stick, lemon zest and juice,
  or lightly crushed cardamom seeds,
  to taste (optional)
2 tablespoons potato starch

Combine the apples, sugar and your choice of spices in a large pot. The spices will need to simmer for a bit with the fruit. Pour in 500 ml/17 fl oz/(2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) water, bring to the boil, then reduce the heat. Simmer until the apples begin to soften all the way through.

In a small bowl, mix the potato starch with a couple of tablespoons of cold water. Stir it into the compote and bring to the boil once again. Adjust the balance of sweetness and acidity and add any more fragile seasoning like the lemon zest.

RHUBARB COMPOTE

Rabarberkompot (Denmark)
Rabarberkräm (Sweden)

Serve warm or cold for dessert, or as a light meal with cold milk and some sugar sprinkled on top.

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Serves: 4

530 g/1 lb 3 oz rhubarb, chopped
sugar, to taste
2–3 tablespoons potato starch

Bring 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) water to the boil in a pot over a medium heat. Add the rhubarb and cook for 10 minutes, or until tender. Stir in the sugar.

In a small bowl, mix the potato starch with a couple of tablespoons of water. Stir it into the compote and return to a simmer. Remove from the heat and serve immediately or leave to cool for later.

GOOSEBERRY COMPOTE

Stikkelsbærkompot (Denmark)
Krusbärskräm (Sweden)

Serve warm or cold for dessert, or as a light meal with cold milk and perhaps a sprinkle of sugar.

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Serves: 4

500–700 g/1 lb 2 oz–1 lb 8½ oz fresh gooseberries
sugar, to taste (more if the berries are tart and less if they are sweet and ripe)
2–3 tablespoons potato starch

Bring 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) of water to the boil in a pot over a medium heat. Add the gooseberries and cook until they are done. They should not be raw, but rather, they should burst open a little and be warm all the way through. Stir in the sugar.

In a small bowl, mix the potato starch with a couple of tablespoons of cold water. Stir it into the compote and return to a simmer. Take off the heat and serve immediately or leave to cool for later.

BERRY COMPOTE

Rødgrøt (Norway)
Kiisseli (Finland)
Bærkompot / Rødgrød (Denmark)
Bärkräm (Sweden)

Serve warm or cold in a bowl for dessert, or as a light meal with cold milk poured over it and perhaps some sugar sprinkled on top.

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Serves: 4

500–700 g/1 lb 2 oz–1½ lb raspberries, blueberries or strawberries, rinsed and hulled if necessary
sugar, to taste
2–3 tablespoons potato starch

Put three-quarters of the berries in a large pot and pour in 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) of water. Bring to a simmer over a medium heat, then stir in the sugar.

In a small bowl, mix the potato starch with a couple of tablespoons of cold water. Stir it into the compote and return to a simmer. Add the rest of the berries, then take off the heat.

PRUNE COMPOTE

Sviskegrøt (Norway)
Luumukiisseli (Finland)
Sveskekompot (Denmark)
Katrinplommonkräm / Sviskonkräm (Sweden)

This compote is the classic condiment for the Semolina Oven Pancake from Åland (page 494).

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Makes: 400 ml/14 fl oz (1⅔ cups)

150 g/5 oz (⅔ cup) pitted prunes
1 tablespoon sugar
1 tablespoon potato starch

Put the prunes and the sugar in a pot and pour in 300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) water. Bring it to a simmer over a medium heat, then cook for about 5 minutes, or until the prunes are soft.

In a small bowl, mix the potato starch with a few tablespoons of cold water. Whisk it into the compote, then bring it back to a simmer and cook until it thickens. Some of the prunes will break up and others will remain in one piece.

NORWEGIAN LINGONBERRY COMPOTE

Tytinggrøt / Tyttebærgrøt (Norway)

This is called lingonberry porridge in Norway, but it doesn't contain any grain and is made like other berry compotes in the Nordic countries, so I have put it in this part of the book rather than the porridge chapter. Eat it warm or cold for lunch, or as a light meal in the afternoon with some cold milk on top.

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Serves: 4

500 g/1 lb 2 oz (2¼ cups) lingonberries
200 g/7 oz (1 cup) sugar
3 tablespoons potato starch

Place the berries and 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) water in a pot and bring to the boil over a medium heat. Add the sugar and keep at a simmer for a few minutes.

Stir the potato starch into some cold water in a bowl then add the mixture to the simmering berries. Mix well with a spoon and keep cooking it for another 2 minutes.

POACHED APPLES STUFFED WITH JAM

Súreplasúlta (Faroe Islands)

Often filled with jam made from rhubarb or berries (pages 510–11), this is served as a condiment with various Faroese dishes.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Serves: 4

2 apples, peeled, halved and cored
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar
4 teaspoons jam (pages 510–11), to serve

Place the apple halves in a pot. Add the sugar and 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons) water and bring to a very low simmer over a medium heat. Move the pot to the side of the stove and leave to rest for about 20 minutes.

Carefully lift the apple halves out of the pot with a slotted spoon and place them, cut side up, on a serving platter. Place a spoonful of jam onto each apple where the core used to be.

BASIC RECIPES

Previous page: Fishing, Landverk, Jämtland, Sweden, 2016.

Opposite: Looking through recipes, Hopia bakery, Helsinki, Finland, winter 2014.

WHITE ICING

In most Nordic pastries the icing tends to be a bit less firm than in other parts of the world. If using a piping (pastry) bag, only use a round nozzle because the icing simply won't hold any other shape. In most cases, though, a spoon is a better way to apply the icing. If you are making more elaborate decorations or need very thin lines, such as for gingerbread houses and the like, you will need a slightly thicker and more creamy icing. In this case just substitute the water for an egg white and beat the icing until thick.

Preparation time: 5 minutes
Makes: 300 g/11 oz (1 cup)

240 g/8½ oz (2 cups) icing (confectioners') sugar

Place the icing (confectioners') sugar in a bowl and mix with 2 tablespoons water (possibly a little more). Use immediately.

CHOCOLATE ICING

Preparation time: 5 minutes
Makes: 300 g/11 oz (1 cup)

240 g/8½ oz (2 cups) icing (confectioners') sugar
2 tablespoons cocoa powder

Place the icing (confectioners') sugar and cocoa powder in a bowl and mix with 2 tablespoons water (possibly a little more). Use immediately.

DANISH PASTRY FILLINGS

Remonce (Denmark)

This French-sounding pastry filling is actually a Danish invention used in many classic baked goods. The brown sugar version is used for Brown Sugar Yeast Cake (page 286) and might contain cassia cinnamon for flavouring. The white sugar version is used for many Danish pastries (page 372) and sometimes contains a bit of egg white. The recipe I use doesn't and seems to work just fine anyhow.

BROWN SUGAR PASTRY FILLING (VERSION 1)

Mørk remonce (Denmark)

Preparation and cooking time: 10 minutes
Makes: about 375 g/13¼ oz (1½ cups)

150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
250 g/9 oz (1⅓ cups) soft brown sugar
2 tablespoons ground cassia cinnamon (optional)

Cream the butter and sugar (and cinnamon, if using) together just before using.

For Brown Sugar Yeast Cake (page 286), combine all the ingredients in a small pot and heat gently until they have melted and dissolved to a smooth, shiny consistency.

WHITE SUGAR PASTRY FILLING (VERSION 2)

Lys remonce (Denmark)

Preparation time: 10 minutes
Makes: about 375 g/13¼ oz (1½ cups)

125 g/4½ oz (1 stick) butter, at room temperature
125 g/4½ oz (½ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
125 g/4½ oz Almond Paste (see below), grated on the coarse side of a box grater

Cream the butter, sugar and almond paste together in a bowl just before using.

ALMOND PASTE

Almond paste is equal parts ground almonds and sugar worked together to form a paste. Depending on the water content of the almonds you might need to add something to help turn the sugar and almonds into a paste rather than just two powders. Generally, home cooks use an egg white thinking that it's the egg that makes the texture good when it's rather the water content of the egg. Finished almond paste should have a water content of roughly 10 per cent. If you blanch your almonds yourself the added moisture from that process is more than enough, and if you (like me), like brown almond paste with the skin left on the almonds, or if you have bought already blanched and dry almonds, then adding 20 ml (1½ tablespoons) of water or so to this recipe should do the trick.

It's so much tastier to make your own almond paste rather than buying something that has been sitting in the shop for months and which was probably not even made from very good almonds in the first place. This recipe makes a full 1 kg/2¼ lb of finished almond paste. Don't make less, as the recipe is more difficult to execute with a smaller quantity. This paste stores well, just make sure to wrap it tightly in clingfilm (plastic wrap) so that it doesn't dry out, then freeze it to retain the almond aroma and make sure it doesn't go rancid. If frozen it will keep for up to 6 months. Most home recipes for almond paste use icing (confectioners') sugar, but this is not a good idea as icing sugar contains additives to keep it from forming lumps. Most often what's added is potato starch, which you can taste if used in recipes that aren't cooked or baked. The reason for the use of icing sugar is that it's hard to get a fine enough texture to the paste with normal sugar using domestic equipment and recipe batch sizes suitable for home use. What I do is mix my ordinary sugar to a fine powder in a blender or food processor before I add it to the almonds. This works very well. You need to use a nut grinder (see illustration page 84) for the almonds – a food processor does not work well because the result will not be even.

Preparation and cooking time: 30–40 minutes
Makes: 1 kg/2¼ lb almond paste

500 g/1 lb 2 oz (3¾ cups) almonds with the skin still on (skip the blanching step if you want brown almond paste that tastes a bit stronger)
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (2½ cups) sugar

Bring a large pot of water to the boil and add the almonds. Boil for a few minutes, then strain the almonds through a colander before rinsing in cold water. Squeeze an almond between your thumb and index finger until it pops out of its skin, then repeat with all the almonds, discarding the skins.

Grind the almonds in an almond grinder, then add them to the bowl of a stand mixer. Add the sugar to a food processor with the knife attachment or to a blender and process to a fine powder. Add the sugar to the bowl of the stand mixer, attach the paddle attachment and work at low-medium speed for 5 minutes.

When the almonds have just been blanched the moisture content should be enough to form a paste. If the mixture is still completely powdery after 5 minutes add 20 ml/¾ fl oz (1½ tablespoons) water and work for another 5 minutes. Don't add more water too quickly as it might result in a very wet paste. Almond paste should be very stiff and it should not contain so much water that the sugar dissolves, which means it then just gets very sticky. However, if your almonds were very dry and the paste doesn't come together, add another 20 ml/¾ fl oz (1½ tablespoons) every 5 minutes and continue working it until it does.

MARZIPAN

There is a bit of confusion between what's almond paste and what's marzipan. If you look at the stuff you buy in a shop, the main difference is that almond paste is ground almonds and sugar that's mixed until it binds together, while marzipan is exactly the same thing but with another step added, which reduces the particle size of both the sugar and the ground almonds. Industrial almond paste is passed through something called a roll mill, which ensures a very small and uniform particle size and a very tight emulsion. Marzipan is therefore easier to shape into smooth looking and detailed figures and also easier to roll out into sheets than almond paste. Most marzipan also contains a little more sugar than almond paste. It's almost impossible to make marzipan at home (unless you happen to have a roll mill) and recipes for homemade marzipan often contain up to 80 per cent sugar to create a smooth enough texture without the help of proper machines, which means that those recipes taste of nothing. While almond paste is almost always better when made at home, marzipan almost never is. My advice is now you know the difference, buy your marzipan from a great supplier and make your almond paste yourself according to the recipe on page 531. Also, never use marzipan mixed into recipes and don't substitute almond paste with marzipan, as the sugar content from almost every producer of marzipan varies while with almond paste it's pretty much always 50 per cent. Marzipan is made to be shaped into detailed figures and to roll out to cover cakes, while almond paste is made to be a part of batters and fillings.

VANILLA CUSTARD SAUCE OR CREAM

A really great and common thing to serve with various cakes, pies and other pastries, and something that is sometimes even included in the recipes themselves in this book, is vanilla custard. There are two different ones: Vanilla Custard / Crème Anglaise and Vanilla Custard / Pastry Cream. The first is a pourable sauce that can be served just as it is. And the second one is a vanilla cream that is used as a component in, for example, layer cakes. However, if you follow the instructions in the introduction to that recipe and fold some cream into it you will get a great spoonable vanilla sauce to serve with things like pies and crumbles.

VANILLA CUSTARD / CRÈME ANGLAISE

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 600 ml/20 fl oz (2½ cups)

250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) milk
250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) cream
1 very good-quality vanilla bean, fat, soft and fragrant, split in half and seeds scraped out
6 egg yolks
85 g/3 oz (⅓ cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
ice, to cool

Pour the milk and cream into a pot and place over a medium heat with the vanilla bean and scraped out seeds and bring to a simmer.

Meanwhile, whisk the egg yolks and sugar together in a bowl until pale and fluffy. Remove the milk from the heat and add one quarter of the warm milk to the eggs and sugar mix while beating vigorously. This is called tempering and helps prevent the eggs from curdling when you add them to the hot milk by evening out the temperatures a little.

Pour the egg mixture (now containing a quarter of the total milk) back into the pot containing the rest of the milk, while stirring. Return to a low heat, stirring constantly with a large spoon. You can see when the vanilla sauce is beginning to be ready as it will start to thicken. When you are satisfied with the texture, immediately pour the hot mixture into a clean bowl set over ice to stop the cooking and stir until the vanilla sauce is completely cooled down. Strain and serve.

VANILLA CUSTARD / PASTRY CREAM

This is a good and versatile recipe for vanilla pastry cream. It is a really thick basic recipe and if you are going to use it on its own, for example with a pie for dessert, whisk 300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) cream and fold into the custard base just before serving. If you are using it as part of a pastry like the Green Marzipan Layer Cake (page 446), use the base recipe below and add only those things to it specified in the recipe in which it is used.

Preparation time: 30 minutes
Makes: about 500 ml/17 fl oz (2 cups plus 2 tablespoons)

5 egg yolks
100 g/3½ oz (½ cup) sugar
2 tablespoons cornflour (cornstarch)
250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) milk
250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) cream
1–2 vanilla beans, split open

Mix the egg yolks, sugar and cornflour (cornstarch) in a bowl and whisk until the sugar has dissolved and everything has turned a bit thicker and lighter.

Pour the milk and cream into a pot, add the vanilla beans and bring to a simmer over a medium heat. Remove the pot from the heat and pour a third of the hot milk mixture into the bowl containing the eggs. Whisk so that the eggs don't curdle, then pour everything back into the pot, mixing it with the remaining milk mixture. Stir vigorously until fully combined and place the pot back onto the heat. Stir all the time using a stiff whisk until the cream has thickened, then continue to cook slowly for another 5 minutes, stirring all the time.

Remove the pot from the heat and continue stirring for another couple of minutes, then transfer the very thick pastry cream to a bowl and remove the vanilla beans. Leave to cool to room temperature then transfer to the refrigerator. Cool to refrigerator temperature before using or store refrigerated until you need it.

Before you use the pastry cream, you need to stir the cold and very firm cream with a stiff whisk to loosen it up and to make it smooth again. This can be quite tough to do but you can use a stand mixer if necessary.

UNCOOKED VANILLA CREAM

It is a bit of work and not particularly easy to make classic vanilla cream. I see a lot of people today who instead make something similar to the recipe below. In a classic recipe, the texture is achieved by heating the eggs and starch together, then adding some whipped cream to finish, for flavour and a fluffier texture. The recipe below sort of works the other way round. It uses the cream as the base – whipped to provide texture – and the egg yolks, which are raw, are just added to contribute their flavour.

It's not quite as delicious as a classic vanilla cream, but it's still perfectly tasty with very little work required.

Preparation time: 10 minutes
Makes: enough for 6 people as a side with pie

300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) cream
3 tablespoons sugar
1½ tablespoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
3 egg yolks

Whip the cream and sugars together in a bowl until soft peaks form, then add the egg yolks and stir until fully combined. Use immediately.

VANILLA ICE CREAM

At its simplest, vanilla ice cream is just Vanilla Custard / Crème Anglaise (page 532) frozen under constant movement. The movement prevents large ice crystals from forming and thereby giving a nice, smooth texture. The only thing to bear in mind is that the recipe outlined here does not contain any glucose and because of this will not keep for very long in the freezer. It is best to churn it in an ice cream machine, if you have one, and serve it the same day.

BUTTERCREAM

Flavour your buttercream with vanilla or grated lemon zest, according to taste.

Preparation time: 10 minutes
Makes: 400 g/14 oz (1½ cups)

175 g/6 oz (1½ sticks) butter, soft
200 g/7 oz (1½ cups) icing (confectioners') sugar
seeds and scrapings of 1 vanilla bean or the zest of 1 lemon
1 egg yolk

Beat the butter with the icing (confectioners') sugar and your choice of flavouring in a bowl until smooth, pale and creamy white. Add the egg yolk and mix until just combined.

CHOCOLATE BUTTERCREAM

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Makes: 400 g/14 oz (1½ cups)

75 g/2¾ oz dark (semisweet) chocolate, coarsely broken into pieces
125 g/4½ oz (1 stick) butter, at room temperature
160 g/5½ oz (1¼ cups) icing (confectioners') sugar
1 egg yolk
2 teaspoons Vanilla Sugar (page 536)

Melt the chocolate following the instructions on page 82. Once the chocolate has melted, stir briefly to ensure no lumps of unmelted chocolate remain.

Combine the butter, icing sugar, egg yolk and vanilla sugar in a medium bowl and mix well until pale and fluffy.

Add the melted chocolate, little by little. It is important not to add it too quickly or to use too hot chocolate, otherwise it will melt the butter and split the emulsion.

CHOCOLATE SAUCE

Preparation and cooking time: 10 minutes
Serves: 4, generously

100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) cream
100 g/3½ oz (7 tablespoons) butter
40 g/1½ oz (⅓ cup) cocoa powder
140 g/4¾ oz (⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons) golden syrup
85 g/3 oz (⅓ cup plus 1½ tablespoons) sugar
good pinch of salt

Combine all the ingredients in a pot and bring to the boil over a medium heat. Simmer until it reaches the consistency you want.

FINNISH FUDGE / CARAMEL SAUCE

Kinuski (Finland)
Karamelsovs (Denmark)
Tjinuski (Sweden)

Kinuski is different from other fudge and caramel sauces made in the Nordic countries in the sense that a great part of its flavour profile comes from the aroma of caramelizing lactose – much like French confiture de lait or the Latin American dulce de leche. The name comes from the Russian word тянучки *(tyanuchki)*. *Kinuski* was brought to Finland, (commercially, at least), by Karl Fazer, the founder of Fazer, one of Finland's largest producers of processed food and sweets (candy).

In Sweden, where the sauce is also popular, a great deal of confusion exists about what to put in a *kinuski*. Many recipes use butter, which is unthinkable in Finland, and quite a few are also flavoured with dried and ground ginger. These recipes produce a very tasty caramel sauce but not a true *kinuski*.

Finnish recipes vary a bit in the sense that the balance between cream and milk can differ from all milk to all cream – and everything in between. The more cream, the richer the sauce and the more milk, the stronger the flavour of caramelized lactose.

A slow cooking is essential for a proper caramelization, so even though you could achieve the proper colour in a much shorter time, it is essential to let it take its time for a great flavour.

Kinuski is often poured hot over frozen tart berries (like lingonberries) as a dessert. Sometimes ice cream is served on the side.

Preparation and cooking time: 3 hours
Serves: 4

250 g/9 oz (1¼ cups) sugar
250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup plus 2 tablespoons) milk or cream, or a mixture of both

Combine the sugar and milk or cream in a pot and heat gently over a low heat. Keep at a low simmer, stirring frequently, until the sauce thickens to a nice consistency, is a good amber in colour and tastes of deeply caramelized dairy. Be prepared for this to take a good 2½–3 hours. If it gets too thick you can add a little more milk towards the end.

If you are uncertain of the correct consistency, it should reach a thick, but still runny sauce at about 105–107°C/220–225°F on a thermometer.

SWEET CHERRY SAUCE

Kirsebærsauce (Denmark)

This is the most common condiment for Danish Almond Rice Pudding (page 488), served at Christmas time.

Most of the recipes I have seen seem to use a ready-bought cherry jam that is diluted with water and thickened with some starch. Quite a few recipes use a little alcohol towards the end. It can be cherry wine, rum, pretty much anything it seems. Add that if you want to.

Serve your cherry sauce warm or cold.

Preparation and cooking time: 15 minutes
Serves: 4

250 g/9 oz cherries, fresh or frozen, pitted
80 g/3 oz (¼ cup plus 3 tablespoons) sugar
cherry wine, rum, or your choice of alcohol, to taste
1 tablespoon potato starch
Danish Almond Rice Pudding (page 488), to serve

Combine the cherries, sugar and alcohol, in a small pot. Add 200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) water, bring to a simmer and cook until the cherries are tender. Mix the potato starch with a little water and pour into the pot, stirring constantly. Return to a simmer and cook for another 2–3 minutes. Add the alcohol, if using, just before serving the sauce.

CINNAMON SUGAR

A mix of cinnamon and sugar is widely used to top porridges and sometimes cultured milk and cereals in the Nordic region. It's also used to coat various pastries. To make cinnamon sugar, simply mix ground cinnamon (preferably not real cinnamon but rather cassia) with sugar. A good ratio is 180 g/6½ oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) sugar to 3 tablespoons ground cinnamon.

VANILLA SUGAR

Pour 200 g/7 oz (1 cup) of sugar into a bowl. Split one really fat and leathery vanilla pod lengthwise and scrape the seeds out using the back of a knife. Add the seeds and the split pod to the sugar and mix well. Transfer the sugar into a clean glass jar with a tight fitting lid and leave at least overnight to infuse before using.

SWEET REDUCED WHEY SPREAD

Mysingur (Iceland)
Prim (Norway)
Messmör (Sweden)

This is a reduced whey product, which in some ways resembles dulce de leche. The main difference is that it is made from the whey that is left after making cheese – like Brown Cheese (page 537).

This sweet spread is very popular on sandwiches, especially among kids. The main difference between *brunost* and this spreadable product is that the spreadable product has been cooked less, therefore it has a higher water content and a lower concentration of dry matter.

Sweet reduced whey spread is mainly an industrial product today and few people make it on an artisanal scale. It is most often found in aluminium tubes resembling old-fashioned toothpaste tubes.

ICELANDIC CULTURED FRESH CHEESE

Skyr (Iceland)

Skyr has been made in Iceland since the island was first settled and it is mentioned several times in the Icelandic Sagas. It resembles strained yogurt but is, in fact, a fresh cheese, since it has rennet added to it in the production process. The dominant strains of *lactobacillus*, which give *skyr* its flavour profile, are *Streptococcus salivarius subsp. thermophilus* and *Lactobacillus delbrueckii subsp. bulgaricus.*

Skyr is made from skimmed milk and has a nutritional content of about 12% protein, 3% carbohydrate, and 0.5% fat. Traditionally made from unpasteurized milk, *skyr* today is mostly made from industrial pasteurized milk and can be bought in supermarkets much the same way as yogurt, flavoured in a multitude of ways. The whey, which is a natural by-product, is collected and drunk as a refreshing beverage called *mysa*.

Skyr is often eaten as a snack or as a dessert, with milk and sugar or with berries. It is also in recipes like Icelandic Skyr and Porridge Mix (page 247).

Preparation and cooking time: 2 days
Makes: about 2.5 litres/84½ fl oz (10 cups) of skyr and 2.5 litres/84½ fl oz (10 cups) of whey

5 litres/169 fl oz (20 cups) skimmed (skim) milk, plus extra to serve
50 ml/2 fl oz (3½ tablespoons) *skyr*, to be used as a starter
4 teaspoons liquid rennet (or use the amount indicated on your bottle)
sugar, to serve (optional)

Pour the milk into a large heavy-bottomed pot and heat to 85°C/175°F. Maintain the heat for 10 minutes using an accurate thermometer and a timer. It's important to control this process, since both the time and temperature will affect the texture of the finished product. Basically, the higher the temperature and the longer the time you leave it, the creamier the finished *skyr* will be.

Take the pan off the heat and leave it next to the stove to slowly cool to 37°C/98.6°F before adding the *skyr* starter and the liquid rennet. Stir briskly with a whisk so that everything mixes well, but don't stir it for too long or it will impact the effectiveness of the rennet. Put a lid on the pot when you have finished stirring. The trick now is to keep the *skyr* in the pot at roughly the same temperature for 3 hours or more. This you can do either by insulating the pot with towels, or by placing it somewhere warm, but not hot.

After 3 hours, have a look and see how the curdling process is going. By now it should be firm enough to cut. Use a knife that is long enough to reach the bottom of the pot to cut the curds into 9 large pieces. Cover the pot again and leave in a warm place for 3 hours. Refrigerate overnight.

The next day, tip the *skyr* and the whey into a colander lined with a sheet of muslin (cheesecloth). Leave to drip overnight somewhere cool and reserve the whey to drink if you want to use it.

When the *skyr* is ready to be served, whisk it with milk and possibly some sugar until smooth. It should have the texture of creamy, strained yogurt.

BROWN CHEESE

Mysostur (Iceland)
Mysost (Norway)
Meesjuusto (Finland)
Myseost (Denmark)
Brunost / Mesost (Sweden)

Brown cheese is made from the whey that is left after making cheese. It is produced by reducing the whey, which is rich in milk sugars, with a bit of milk and sometimes cream for an extended period of time. The increased concentration of solids slowly thickens it at the same time as the lactose starts to caramelize giving the product its brown colour and distinctive flavour. If boiled for a shorter amount of time it will instead become soft Sweet Reduced Whey Spread (page 536).

Brown cheese can be made from either cow or goat's milk or a combination of them both. I still have a hard time eating it after the traumatic childhood memories of having my ordinary yellow cheese regularly contaminated by traces of brown cheese while making myself a breakfast sandwich. The cheese knife – as I recall there was only one in the Nilsson household – was used for both.

FINNISH EGG BUTTER

Munavoi (Finland)

A very popular spread or topping for Karelian Pasties (page 208).

Preparation and cooking time: 5 minutes
Makes: enough for 8 pasties

2 hard-boiled eggs, unshelled and chilled
2 tablespoons butter, at room temperature
salt, to taste

Shell the eggs, then chop them coarsely and place in a small mixing bowl. Add the butter and work gently with a spoon until creamy but not completely smooth. Season with salt, if necessary.

MAYONNAISE

I hate mayo that is not thick enough; it should be stiff! If not, it goes very liquid from dilution as soon as it comes in contact with any type of moist food you are eating or mixing it with. Add more oil if it isn't really thick. If you are using it in a sauce that has more liquids in it, or a salad, it could be on the verge of splitting from containing a lot of oil when you mix it with the remaining ingredients. The water content in the thing you are mixing the mayo with will make it perfect as it dilutes it a bit.

Preparation time: 20 minutes
Serves: 4

2 egg yolks
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 tablespoons white vinegar
250 ml/8 fl oz (1 cup) neutral oil
salt and white pepper, to taste

Put the egg yolks in a bowl. Whisk in the mustard and vinegar then season with a pinch of salt and a little white pepper. Add the oil, a drop at a time, beating slowly but constantly, until no oil remains and the mayo is nice and thick. Season to taste.

FRIED SALT PORK

Slices of salt pork belly can be fried in a pan or baked in the oven. The oven will give a more crisp and dry result, and the pan version will be a bit softer, but still nicely caramelized. I prefer the pan.

Some people like the rind of the pork still on for this preparation; I don't. It never turns into crispy crackling because the process is too short, and the rind is inevitably damp. The rind, if left on, will only turn into a chewy shoestring of pig's hide; at least it has every time I have tried it.

SALT PORK FRIED IN THE PAN

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Serves: 4

600 g/1 lb 5 oz salt pork, rind removed, cut into 4-mm/⅛-inch slices
butter, for frying (depending on how fatty the pork is)

Arrange the pork in a large, cold pan over a medium heat. Slowly fry until they are nicely coloured on both sides. If they don't render enough fat to fry properly, then add a small knob of butter to the pan. Serve as soon as they are nicely coloured.

SALT PORK BAKED IN THE OVEN

Preparation and cooking time: 20 minutes
Serves: 4

600 g/1 lb 5 oz salt pork, rind removed, cut into 4-mm/¼-inch slices

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and line a roasting pan with baking (parchment) paper (so it is easier to clean).

Spread the pork slices out in a single layer. Bake until golden brown, crisp and crunchy.

RENDERED ANIMAL FATS

Flottyr (Sweden)

I think this mix is one of the very best for rich-tasting, crisp and delicious deep-fried pastries. It is not very common today, but if you have the opportunity, do make some and freeze it in a bag, ready to defrost and use when you need it.

Preparation and cooking time: 1 hour
Makes: 2 kg/4¼ lb rendered fat

1.5 kg/3¼ lb leaf pork lard, coarsely broken into chunks
1.5 kg/3¼ lb beef suet (kidney fat), coarsely broken into chunks

Bring 200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) water to the boil in a pot big enough to hold all the fat. Add the fat to the water and cover the pot with a lid. Simmer carefully for about 30 minutes. When all the fat looks translucent and has warmed through properly, strain it through an ordinary sieve and then through muslin (cheesecloth) or a chinois (conical) strainer. Remember to keep the fat warm as you strain it so that it doesn't solidify.

Cool completely then transfer to a bag or a lidded container and freeze until you need it.

MULLED WINE

Glögi (Finland)
Gløgg (Denmark)
Glögg (Sweden)

The various Nordic names for this warm and sweet Christmas drink come from the word *glödga*, meaning 'to heat'. The tradition of serving spiced hot wine dates back to Roman times and has been popular in the Nordic countries at least since the early seventeenth century. By the mid-nineteenth century it has been possible to buy bottles of pre-flavoured wine to heat. It is available today in countless variations made from different wines with different flavourings and also in non-alcoholic versions.

Mulled wine in the Nordics is generally drunk from special handled cups or glasses that hold between 50–75 ml/2–2¼ fl oz of liquid. Common accompaniments to mulled wine are raisins and blanched almonds, which are spooned into the cups by each drinker.

In Norway, Finland and Sweden the drink is often served at Christmas as a sort of snack with Scanian Thick and Chewy Gingersnaps (page 335) and in Sweden and some parts of Finland also with Saint Lucy's Day Saffron Buns (page 274). In Denmark *gløgg* can also be paired with *Æbleskiver* (page 305). Mulled wine can also be part of the traditional Christmas dinner – either served before as an aperitif or to go with the dessert.

There are, as I mentioned, countless versions of this mulled wine but I have included two: one that I like, which is fresher in acidity than the most common ones, and another that is based on a blackcurrant cordial (page 512) and therefore free of alcohol.

MAGNUS'S GLÖGG (VERSION 1)

Many old recipes for mulled wine in the Nordic state that you are supposed to make a kind of essence from the aromatics and hard liquor that you then add to the sweetened wine. I prefer to mix everything together and keep it in a glass jar rather than a bottle, aromatics macerating in the wine itself before being strained as you pour the *glögg* into a pot to heat and drink it.

Choose a young red wine, not too tannic and not too oaky. I like to use a not-too expensive Burgundy or another pinot noir of that style. For the brandy, do not use a too-oaky one, but rather a young fruity kind. Often a simpler and cheaper one from the bottom range of the brands is perfect.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Macerating time: at least a week
Makes: 1 litre/34 fl oz (4½ cups)

750 ml/25 fl oz (3 cups) young red wine
1 knob fresh ginger
1 vanilla bean
5 cardamom pods
20 cloves
2 cassia cinnamon sticks
10 black peppercorns
1 orange, sliced (rind and all)
1 lemon, sliced (rind and all)
100 ml/3½ fl oz (⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon) sweet Madeira
150 g/5 oz (¾ cup) sugar
a dash of Cognac or Calvados
3 tablespoons honey, or to taste

Combine all of the ingredients, except the honey, in a sterilized, lidded glass jar. Seal tightly and leave to macerate for at least a week. Agitate the jar from time to time so that the sugar doesn't just sit at the bottom but dissolves into the wine.

When you are ready to drink the wine, strain it through a fine-mesh sieve straight into a pot. You don't have to use it all at once; you can strain just the amount you need and leave the rest to continue macerating. If the spices become too strong, then add a splash more red wine as you heat it, and perhaps some extra sugar.

Heat the wine gently, adding honey until you think it is sweet enough.

ALCOHOL-FREE GLÖGG (VERSION 2)

To make a *glögg* without alcohol, some people just boil one that had alcohol in it. I don't much like this as it completely destroys the aromas of the beverage. I prefer to make one from a blackcurrant cordial (page 512) instead.

Follow the recipe for Magnus's Glögg (page 539), but substitute the total amount of alcohol 850 ml/ 29 fl oz (3⅓ cups plus 1 tablespoon) with a strong mix of blackcurrant cordial and water.

Since it contains no alcohol, it is possible for the mixture to start fermenting if you are unlucky. Also cordial isn't quite as effective at drawing flavour out of the spices.

To ensure a good result, bring the cordial to the boil with the sugar, then carefully pour the boiling liquid onto the aromatics in a heatproof sterilized glass jar. Cover with a lid, seal tightly and leave to macerate for about 3 days. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve and freeze if you are not going to use it straight away.

When ready to serve, heat the *glögg* gently, adding honey until you think it is sweet enough.

ÄTTIKA

Ättika is a solution of acetic acid in water used as vinegar in the Nordic region. It is most often produced by oxidization of wood alcohol or as a by-product from the paper industry. This crystal-clear vinegar is sold in several concentrations of acetic acid that are suitable for different purposes.

Solutions of acetic acid in water similar to this are available in most countries under different names, – often something along the lines of 'distilled white vinegar' or just 'white vinegar'. In Central Europe it is mostly used for cleaning and is sometimes found around the cleaning supplies. Below are the Swedish names of the different strengths available here.

Absolut ren ättika 24% is not suitable for consuming before diluting with water, but it is space-saving, in comparison to lower concentrations. It can also be used to polish windows and remove calcium stains on hard surfaces like stainless steel work counters and sinks. If your room smells of smoke or is musty it is said that *Ättika* in a saucer left overnight absorbs the smell. If there is any actual absorption taking place or if it is rather that the smell of the vinegar itself covers any previous smell is perhaps a debatable fact.

Ättika / Ättikssprit 12% is what is used in recipes if *Ättika* is mentioned and no other concentration is specified. Equal parts absolut ren *Ättika* 24% and clean water makes *Ättika / Ättikssprit* 12%.

Inläggningsättika 6% can be used straight from the bottle to make unsweetened quick pickles and as a seasoning in cooking. It has a similar concentration of acetic acid (sourness) as vinegar made from wine. One quarter absolut ren *Ättika* 24% and three-quarters water or equal parts *Ättika / Ättikssprit* 12% and water makes *Inläggningsättika* 6%.

Matättika 3% is used mainly as a seasoning in finished dishes or as a condiment. It can be used, for example, on a salad or on a piece of fried fish instead of a squeeze of lemon. One eighth *absolut ren ättika* and seven-eighths of water or a quarter of *Ättika / Ättikssprit* and three-quarters of water makes *Matättika* 3%.

SOURDOUGH STARTER

Sourdough starter is an important part of many recipes, as it gives flavour, acidity and rise from a gentle balance of living *lactobacillus, acetobacter* and various strains of yeast.

It's very easy to make and maintain sourdough starter if you bake regularly, let's say a couple of times per week, but it's very difficult to do so if you don't. An unused sourdough starter generally goes very sour as bacteria multiply and produce lactic and acetic acid at the expense of the yeast. Sourdough starter can also spoil if it isn't properly cared for and can go mouldy or even rot. If it doesn't smell fresh and acidic, a little bit like yogurt, or if it has green mould growing on it throw it out and start again.

Once it has started and is functioning, sourdough starter can be stored in a clean glass jar in the refrigerator for some weeks, but when you need to use it again you need to re-create the balance between the bacteria and yeast. This is done by pouring 200 ml/7 fl oz (¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon) of your old sourdough starter into the bottom of a bowl. After that just follow the instructions below starting on the morning of day 3 and make a new starter on top of the remnants of the old one. This is called feeding the sourdough and should be done the day before you need it if you do not bake with it continuously. If you do bake all the time you can just substitute the amount you took away the minute you use it. This is the best way of working with sourdough starter as it means that it's always perfectly balanced, lively and ready to go, but the amounts of bread produced with this approach can be a bit daunting in anything but a professional environment.

By doing what I have described above, you will over time propagate a sourdough that has your unique make up of things living in it. The stuff that will inhabit your dough is what lives on the grains from which your flour is milled, in the air and on every surface of the house you live in, and on you for that matter too. You just provide the microflora and fauna around you and the right circumstances for them to have a great time and multiply, and they give you amazing sourdough starter in return. You don't need to buy some weird sourdough starter kit – it's unnecessary.

Use either unbleached wheat flour or unbleached rye flour, depending on the type of bread you want to make.

Day 1
200 g/7 oz (1⅔ cups) unbleached wheat flour
or unbleached rye flour

Day 2
200 g/7 oz (1⅔ cups) unbleached wheat flour
or unbleached rye flour

Day 3
200 g/7 oz (1⅔ cups) unbleached wheat flour
or unbleached rye flour

Day 1
Place 200 g/7 oz (1⅔ cups) flour in a bowl, add a little water and stir with a whisk. Keep adding water until your sourdough has the texture of yogurt. Leave the bowl overnight somewhere warm without covering it, like around the stove area in your kitchen, or perhaps on top of the refrigerator.

Day 2
Smell and taste the sourdough. If you can detect any little sign of acidity or freshness aside from the smell of the flour itself then the process has started well and you can proceed to the next step. If absolutely nothing has changed from the day before then leave it for another day before proceeding. When the process has started add another 200 g/7 oz (1⅔ cups) flour and more water and stir with a whisk until the texture is once again like yogurt. Leave the sourdough again overnight.

Day 3
By the third (or fourth if it was a slow starter) morning you should notice a fresh smell and, if you taste it, a slight acidity indicating that the bacteria are multiplying nicely, and perhaps some bubbles of carbon dioxide indicating that the yeast is multiplying too. Add the last 200 g/7 oz (1⅔ cups) flour and again adjust the texture with water until it is like yogurt. For the last time leave the sourdough out overnight but this time cover with clingfilm (plastic wrap). You have all the microbes you need now and the clingfilm prevents the dough from drying out. The following morning the dough should be bubbling with yeasty happiness and smelling very fresh. If you taste it, it should have the acidity of yogurt. Now the sourdough starter is ready to use.

CONES

Use these for serving Vanilla Ice Cream (page 534) with toppings or perhaps just fill them with cream whipped to soft peaks and some jam (pages 510–11) or compote (pages 523–5).

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes
Makes: 12 cones

25 g/1 oz (2 tablespoons) butter, at room temperature
125 g/4½ oz (½ cup plus 2 tablespoons) sugar
1 teaspoon Vanilla Sugar (page 536)
2 eggs
125 g/4½ oz (1 cup) weak (soft) wheat flour

To serve (optional)
whipped cream
strawberry jam (pages 510–11)

Preheat the oven to 175°C/345°F/Gas Mark 4 and line 2 baking sheets with baking (parchment) paper.

Place the butter, sugar, vanilla sugar and one of the eggs in a bowl and stir together before adding the other egg. Add the flour and 2 tablespoons cold water while you keep stirring until the batter is nice and smooth.

Put 6 scoops of batter onto each prepared baking sheet and spread them out to thin rounds. Make sure the batter is evenly thick and that the edges are even, otherwise the cones will break easily.

Bake one baking sheet of rounds at a time for about 6 minutes. Carefully remove the rounds from the baking sheet, one by one, leaving the baking sheet in the oven with the door slightly ajar so that the rounds don't get too cold. Wrap them around a waffle cone roller to shape them into cones and put each cone into a drinking glass to cool and harden.

Serve with whipped cream and strawberry jam, if you like.

PUFF PASTRY

Puff Pastry is a multi-layered dough in which layers of wheat flour and water are separated from each other by layers of butter. When baked, water between the layers will evaporate and multiply in volume thereby making the dough puff up and become flaky. There is never any yeast in puff pastry, which is one of the differences between, for example, puff pastry and Danish pastry, or perhaps croissants, which are also layered with butter, but make use of yeast to leaven and flavour them.

It is not easy to make puff pastry at home, but this is a good basic recipe. I generally buy my puff pastry at a good baker instead of folding it myself. This recipe produces about 1.2 kg/2½ lb. Most recipes in this book only use 500 g/1 lb 2 oz. It is however very difficult to make less than 1 kg/2¼ lb of puff pastry and get good layers. It also freezes really well so whatever you don't need you can wrap tightly in clingfilm (plastic wrap) or a plastic bag and keep for at least 6 months in the freezer.

Most important when making puff pastry is to respect the resting times and the temperature of the dough – it needs to be kept cool otherwise the butter will become too soft and the whole thing will turn into a mess rather than delicate, perfectly separated crispy layers of fluffy puff.

Preparation time: 1 hour
Resting time: at least 6 hours
Makes: 1.2 kg/2½ lb

500 g/1 lb 2 oz (3½ cups plus 2 tablespoons) strong wheat flour
500 g/1 lb 2 oz (4½ sticks) salted butter, cold

Put the flour and 300 ml/10 fl oz (1¼ cups) water into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and work until it just comes together. Shape the dough into a ball using your hands and wrap tightly in clingfilm (plastic wrap), refrigerate and leave to rest for at least 3 hours.

On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough to a circle of about 45 cm/18 inches in diameter.

Place the butter between two sheets of parchment paper and pound with the rolling pin to soften, and shape it into a flat square of 20 cm/8 inches. Place it onto the middle of the dough circle.

Fold the left side and the right side of the dough over the butter so that they meet and overlap a little in the middle. Make sure that no air is trapped along the side of the butter. Repeat with the side of dough facing towards you and the one facing away from you. Once again make sure that there are no air bubbles caught in what now looks a bit like an envelope. Roll over the envelope a few times with your rolling pin to make sure that the edges are all firmly sealed.

Turn the whole thing a quarter lap clockwise. The side formerly facing you should now be pointing left. Roll the dough out into a rectangle of about 25 cm/10 inches in width and 65 cm/25 inches in length. It is important to keep the edges straight; it must not be allowed to turn into a round.

Imagine the rectangle as divided into three equally sized fields beginning from you and ending away from you, three thirds if you will (just imagine, no actual cutting). Fold the third closest to you over the mid third (fold away from yourself) and press down a little. Continue by folding (now fold towards you) the third furthest away from you, over the already folded other two thirds. The end of the last third should meet with the fold of the two others so that the whole thing forms a flattened brick shape. Once again it is very important to not catch any pockets of air in these folds. Press down a little using your hands and wrap the rectangle of dough tightly in clingfilm. Leave it to rest in the refrigerator for 30 minutes. It should look a bit like a flattened brick of about 20 x 25 cm/8 x 10 inches.

Repeat the rolling out to 25 x 65 cm/10 x 25 inches and folding in thirds three more times, refrigerating for 30 minutes after each. Before each rolling out and folding session you should turn the rectangle a quarter lap. This means that when the folding is done you should have the end of the top layer facing you. This side should, after the turn (and before the rolling starts), point left, and the side that is open (the one where you can see all of the of the folds from the previous turn), should point towards you. Never turn the dough over and never turn it anything but clockwise. If you start fiddling about with things like that its very easy to loose track. After the final fold, refrigerate the dough for at least 1 hour but preferably overnight.

BASIC PIE CRUST, SWEET

If you have two pie pans and don't need both free all the time, make a double recipe and store the second one, unbaked, in the freezer until you feel like making pie again. If properly wrapped, the pie crust should keep for at least 6 months. You can bake it straight from the freezer; it will just add another minute or two to the baking time.

Preparation and cooking time: 30–50 minutes
Resting time: 1 hour
Makes: 1 pie crust for a 28-cm/11-inch pie

150 g/5 oz (1 stick plus 2½ tablespoons) butter, cold and cut into 1-cm/½-inch dice
250 g/9 oz (2 cups) wheat flour, plus extra for dusting
50 g/2 oz (½ cup) icing (confectioners') sugar
1 egg

Place the butter, flour and sugar in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the knife blade attachment and pulse until the butter is worked into the dry ingredients. It should look a bit like coarse sand. Add the egg and ½ tablespoon water and pulse again until just combined. Shape the dough into a ball and wrap tightly in clingfilm (plastic wrap) before leaving it to rest in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.

Unwrap the dough and roll it out on a lightly floured work counter until it is just under 5 mm/¼ inch thick. Press into a 28-cm/11-inch non-stick fluted pie pan and leave to rest in the refrigerator for another 30 minutes. Make sure the pan is non-stick or you will need to butter and flour it first.

Preheat the oven to 150°C/300°F/Gas Mark 2. Bake the pie crust for 10–30 minutes until it is the colour you want. Blind bake, if needed (see pages 72–3).

GLOSSARY

ARRACK

An alcoholic spirit distilled from sugar cane, rice, molasses or the sap of coconut or date palms. Produced in India, Sri Lanka and Java, arrack is used in Sweden for pastries, confectionery, and most commonly, a liqueur called *punsch*, which is similar to *grogg*. Can be found in specialty stores or ordered online.

BAKER'S AMMONIA

Also known as ammonium carbonate. A classic leavener and an ancestor of modern baking powder that was originally made from the ground antlers of reindeer. It leads to a crispier bake and has a pungent smell during cooking, which dissipates.

BARLEY FLOUR

A non-wheat, low-fat flour made from grinding whole barley. Can sometimes be substituted with other non-wheat flours, like cornmeal, buckwheat or rice flour.

BENZOIC ACID

A colourless and crystalline acid that, when combined with sodium hydroxide, creates the sodium benzoate used as a food preservative. Benzoic acid occurs naturally in fruits and berries like prunes, plums, cranberries and cloudberries.

BITTER ALMONDS

A rarely commercialised type of almond that is slightly broader and shorter than the common sweet almond and that contains about 50% of the fixed oil that occurs in sweet almonds. These can be poisonous if consumed in large quantities and are banned in the US, despite the believed health benefits of its oil in small quantities. Though they have slightly less flavour, almond and bitter almond extract can be used as substitutes.

BREAD PEEL

A flat, shovel-like tool made from wood and used to slide bread or pizza into an oven.

BREWER'S YEAST

Used to brew beer, this yeast is made from a one-celled fungus. It can also be used for nutritional supplements, as it is a rich source of vitamins and minerals. Yeast extract or nutritional yeast may be used as a substitute.

TO BROWN

To cook food briefly over high heat so that it turns brown, often to enhance flavour or texture.

BRUN FARIN

Also known as soft brown sugar or light brown sugar. Often used to make cakes or pastries like the Brown Sugar Yeast Cake (page 286).

BUTTERFAT

The natural fatty constituent of cows' milk and the chief component of butter. Milk and cream are often sold according to the amount of butterfat they contain. Full-fat (whole) milk usually has around 3.5%, whipped cream can have between 30% and 35%, and double (heavy) cream contains at least 36%. Too little butterfat will leave a dish watery and too much will leave it greasy and sticky.

CASSIA CINNAMON

Also known as Saigon cinnamon. An evergreen tree the bark of which can be used in stick or ground form to provide a spicy-warm flavour to confectionery, desserts, pastries and meat. It is thicker and coarser than classic cinnamon, which can serve as a substitute if used in a smaller amount than that for which the recipe calls.

CLOUDBERRIES

A type of amber-coloured wild berry native to the Arctic and subarctic regions of the North Temperate Zone. They are rich in vitamin C and have a particular place of honour in Swedish cooking. Raspberries make good substitutes, though they are stronger in flavour.

COCONUT FAT

An oil extracted by grating and pressing the flesh of mature coconuts. Liquid at room temperature, it does not taste overpoweringly of coconut and can be a healthy replacement for butter or olive oil.

CULTURED DAIRY

A type of dairy food that has been fermented with lactic acid bacteria in order to increase the shelf life of the product while simultaneously enhancing the taste and improving the digestibility of the milk. Yogurt and sour cream are the two most common cultured dairy foods.

DARK SYRUP

A Scandinavian liquid sweetener processed from sugar beets. It is used in breads, such as Danish Three-Grain Bread (page 109). A good substitute is dark treacle, but that has a spicier note and so it won't give exactly the same flavour.

DRIED BITTER ORANGE PEEL

An ingredient consisting of the dehydrated peel of bitter oranges, such as the Seville variety. Its mild and slightly savoury citrus flavour makes it especially good for marinades and baking. Orange or mandarin zest work as close substitutes.

DRIED ROSEHIPS

A dried version of the cherry-sized fruit of the rose bush left behind after the bloom has died. One of the most concentrated sources of vitamin C available, dried rosehips are citrusy and sour and often used to flavour jelly, jam, soup, oil, and tea.

ELECTRIC HOTPLATE

A portable electric cooker on which food can be cooked directly. Used especially for making flatbreads. See illustration on page 172.

FARINSOCKER

A brown sugar consisting of sugar crystals and dark brown cane sugar syrup, *farinsocker* is less refined than plain white sugar and has a slightly spicy taste that lends itself well to baking and marinades.

FILMJÖLK

A Nordic cultured dairy product made from soured milk. Similar to yogurt, but produced at a lower temperature and using different bacteria and cultures, it has a different taste and texture. It is the modern version of the traditional product *surmjölk* and can be found in some cake or cheese recipes.

FLOUR

Try to use good-quality flour, as this is the foundation of most of your baking. When a recipe calls for 'weak (soft) wheat flour', if you are in the UK use plain flour plus cornflour, which lowers the protein content of the flour and subsequently provides the tenderness necessary for a good cake. If you are based in the US, use good-quality unbleached flour, which has a more natural pale cream colour, rather than bleached flour, which is very white and has been treated with chemicals. For 'weak (soft) wheat flour' use unbleached cake flour.

By contrast, strong wheat flour (strong bread flour in the UK and US) provides a high protein content that gives plenty of structure to bread doughs. Rye flour – used for making a variety of grain products – can vary in density (fine or coarse), but also in colour (light, medium, or dark), depending upon its intended use and the amount of bran in the flour. Flours can vary in water content, so if your dough or batter seems dry after following the recipe exactly, you can always add a tiny bit more liquid.

GINGER, DRIED

A tangy, spicy form of ginger that is stronger than the fresh root and can be candied for use in desserts or powdered for use in stews, casseroles and other dishes. Known for its beneficial affects on stomach ailments. Allspice, cinnamon, mace or nutmeg can be used as substitutes.

GOLDEN SYRUP

Also known as light treacle (light molasses). Similar in appearance to honey and often used as a substitute sweetener when honey is unavailable, golden syrup is sweeter in taste than dark treacle (molasses).

GORO IRON

A cooking appliance consisting of two hinged metal plates moulded to create the sophisticated patterns found on *goro* (page 353). The modern versions can sit atop a stove to cook.

GRÄDDFIL

A dairy product made from cream with added lactic acid bacteria, which gives a thickened, slightly sour result. Less sour than yogurt, the closest substitute is sour cream, though some sour creams can have a fat content close to 18%, whereas *gräddfil* has 12% fat.

GRAHAM FLOUR

A type of unbleached and unrefined whole-wheat flour in which the components (bran, germ and endosperm) are ground separately, which creates a coarse-textured flour with a good shelf-life.

GROUND RYE MALT

A coarse flour made from whole dried germinated rye grains. Containing a strong, but not overly aggressive, malty and bitter flavour, this type of rye produces breads and beers that pair well with sausages and meats. Standard rye would work as a substitute.

GROUND ELDER LEAVES

A common woodland plant that is popular in Sweden. The leaves smell and taste mildly like carrot with a slightly nuttier undertone. Best eaten in the springtime, before the flowers grow and the leaves become too bitter. Avoid eating once the plant has flowered.

HARDANGER ROLLER

A rolling pin made of knobbed disks that create a pattern of dimples or small squares on dough. Used to make the Flatbreads from Hardanger (page 168).

HELMI POTATO PEARLS

A gluten-free brand of instant mashed potato made primarily from potato starch. Can be used to give porridges or pastries a moist, soft texture.

HEMVETE FLOUR

Flour used for making *hemvete*, a black bread with rye, coffee and caraway seeds, made in the Finnish region of Åland.

HVIDTØL

A traditional Danish beverage, which is usually produced with an alcohol content of less than 2% abv. Historically it has been very popular and commonly drunk all year round. Today it is mostly drunk around Christmas, especially with the rice pudding called *Risalamande* (page 488). *Hvidtøl* means 'white beer', but it is actually a very dark beverage. The name comes from the time when malt dried in kilns started to replace the older method of production, which was to dry it over an open fire, a technique that produced a smoky malt and therefore a smoky-tasting beer. *Hvidtøl* is quite sweet from unfermented sugars and it resembles Swedish *Svagdricka* a little in that aspect. *Hvidtøl* is also used in a very old Danish dish called *Øllebrød* (page 248). Today *Hvidtøl* can be completely free of alcohol and more of a malt soda.

ICELANDIC MOSS

A lichen, Icelandic moss (*Cetraria islandica*) is commonly found throughout the northern Nordic countries. It is rich in carbohydrates and has historically been of vital importance as a source of food in the region. It contains a lot of mildly toxic lichenic acid, which will upset your tummy and taste very bitter. The lichen was traditionally made digestible by soaking it before actually cooking in potash, a potassium carbonate solution produced by soaking wood ashes in water. Lichen was often boiled into a porridge with some grains, or milled into flour with grains, to bulk out the valuable cereals. Lichen is still used to some extent in Iceland, where you can find some breads containing a mix of cereal and lichen. In Iceland it can still be bought in a few places and there are traditional recipes for soups, breads and stews containing Icelandic moss.

JUNIPER BERRY

A female seed cone produced by the various species of junipers. It is not a true berry but a cone with unusually fleshy and merged scales, which give it a berry-like appearance. It is spicy and aromatic, can be used fresh or dried and provides the main flavouring for gin and some Finnish beers.

KRANSEKAGE MOULD

A circular mould with ring-shaped cavities and used to bake *kransekake*, a traditional Danish and Norwegian confection usually eaten on special occasions. See illustration on page 462.

LAUFABRAUÐSJÁRN

A rolling tool used to create the leaf-like, geometric patterns on a traditional kind of Icelandic Leaf Bread (page 176) eaten in the Christmas season.

LINGONBERRY

A bright red berry, similar to the cranberry, and also known as the cowberry. Appears on small evergreen shrubs and can be used as a preservative or as an ingredient in its own right.

MALTING (*IMELLYTTÄMINEN*)

To convert the starch of cereal kernels into sugar via the process of steeping, germination and drying.

NEUTRAL OIL

Vegetable-based cooking oils that do not impart any flavour or smell, like sunflower, grapeseed, rapeseed (canola) or groundnut oil.

PASHA MOULD

A wooden pyramid-shaped mould that is lined with muslin (cheesecloth) and used to let the mixture set in the process of making Pasha (a traditional Finnish dessert served for Easter, page 490).

PEA FLOUR

A flour that is milled from yellow split peas that have been roasted, dried and ground. Used to make Pea Flour Flatbreads (page 164), this type of flour harkens back to the time when dried legumes or pulses would be added to a dough to change its consistency.

PEARL SUGAR

A type of sugar made from large blocks that have been crushed and broken up into rock salt-sized granules. It has a high melting point, resulting in granules that stay crunchy without crystallizing.

PIZZA OVEN

An oven consisting of a baking chamber made of fireproof brick, concrete, stone or clay and that is traditionally wood-fired.

PLÄTTJÄRN PAN

A frying pan or skillet with round indentations used to make mini-crepes.

PORK BACK FAT

A cut of hard fat taken from under the skin of a pig's back. It is typically used in sausages and can be cured as a delicacy in its own right. Like most animal fats, it has a high smoking point, so it is good for frying.

POTASH

The common name for various potassium-containing compounds that are found in seawater, and can be mined or manufactured. Its ability to temper mild toxins makes it ideal for soaking very bitter substances, like Icelandic Moss (page 549), prior to cooking to increase digestibility.

RÅGSIKT FLOUR

A mix of sifted bread flour (60%) and rye flour (40%) found in Sweden. Often used to make thick, somewhat dense breads, such as the Golden Syrup Loaf (page 104) or Scanian Rye Breads (page 128).

RIVOR (BIRCH BARK)

A type of bark previously used to weave the baskets in which Finnish Rye Malt Pudding (page 490) would be distributed. Today these puddings are almost always sold in cardboard boxes.

ROLLED RYE FLAKES

The hulled kernels of rye grains that are roasted, steamed and rolled into flakes.

RØMME

A Norwegian heavy sour cream usually containing about 20% fat in industrial production and 35% fat in the artisanal/traditional type called *seterrømme*. It can be substituted with crème fraîche or other soured cream products with similar fat contents. *Rømme* is used as both a condiment, as with Norwegian Waffles (page 234), and as a main component in dishes like Norwegian Sour Cream Porridge (page 246).

ROWAN BERRIES

A bitter, red fruit of the rowan tree that is poisonous to humans when raw but can be eaten when cooked. High in pectin, the berries work well as a jelly (page 511).

RYE BRAN

The hard outer layers of the rye cereal grain.

RYE FLOUR

A powder made by grinding rye cereal grains. Can be fine or coarse.

SALT PORK

A cut from the belly or side of the pig that has been salt-cured, but not smoked, and is often blanched before use to extract some of the salt.

SKRÄDMJÖL

A flour of Finnish origin, now made in the Swedish province of Värmland from roasted oat kernels.

SMETANA

A central and Eastern European dairy product made from soured double (heavy) cream. It is favoured in cooking as it typically has a high fat content, which prevents it from splitting when heated.

SPELT

An ancient species of wheat with an inedible outer husk, and a nutrient-rich bran and grain.

TO STERILISE A GLASS JAR

Heat the oven to 130°C/266°F and wash the jar and lid in hot, soapy water. Place the jar and lid on a baking sheet and place in the oven until it dries completely. Remove from the oven and fill while the jar is still hot. Do not fill hot jars with cold food, as this may cause them to shatter.

STRONG WHEAT FLOUR

See FLOUR

STRUVOR IRON

A cooking appliance with a long metal rod and decorative shapes that attach to one end used to make traditional cookies like Rosettes (page 310).

SUET

A cooking fat made from beef or mutton that is obtained from the area around the kidney and loins. Its high smoke point and ability to add texture and moisture without adding a strong meaty flavour makes it ideal for frying and pastry making.

SURMJÖLK

A traditional Nordic dairy product made from soured milk. Similar in character to runny yogurt. Also see FILMJÖLK

SVAGDRICKA

A sweet small beer. Sweet or semisweet, low-alcohol malt beverages have been consumed all over Europe since the Middle Ages as an everyday drink. In the Nordics it was and usually still is brewed to about 2% alcohol by volume and is most of the time produced with the addition of hops or juniper. In Sweden sweet small beer is often sweetened with the artificial sweetener, saccharin.

Sales of sweet small beer have declined dramatically, partly because now, as opposed to during the Middle Ages, most people have access to drinkable water. After industrialization and the introduction of commercially branded soft drinks and sodas, during the twentieth century, sales of sweet small beer further decreased.

SWEDISH RYE FLOUR

See RÅGSIKT FLOUR

THERMOMETER

A thermometer used to measure the temperature of a cooking sugar solution and which can read extremely high temperatures (usually up to 200°C/400°F).

WEAK (SOFT) WHEAT FLOUR

See FLOUR

WORT

A sweet liquid drained from the brewing process of mashing grain with water, which is then fermented to make beer and whiskey.

YMER

A Danish dairy product that resembles *filmjölk* and is made by fermenting milk before draining its whey, resulting in a higher content of solids, but a relatively low fat content of about 4%.

DIRECTORY

Many of the special ingredients and equipment that you will need for the recipes are widely available in markets, grocery stores and supermarkets in major cities.

If they are not available near you, here is a list of selected online suppliers specializing in Nordic ingredients, utensils and cookware.

UNITED KINGDOM

www.scandikitchen.co.uk
Stocks an array of edible goods, including flours, sweets, alcohol and fresh yogurt from Scandinavian brands.

www.danishfooddirect.co.uk
Specializes in Danish products, particularly seafood, meats and cheese. Ships its fresh and packaged food items internationally.

www.totallyswedish.com
Sells everything Swedish from cookies to fishballs. Also offers classic pantry basics like *filmjölk* and golden syrup.

UNITED STATES

www.ingebretsens.com
Stocks a wide selection of specialist Nordic cooking equipment, including rosette cutters, *lefse* rolling pins (also used to make flatbread), and *kransekake* rings.

www.kingarthurflour.com
Stocks many of the specialty flours, grains and hard-to-find yeasts used in Nordic recipes. Mostly ships to North America, but offers international shipping.

www.lefsetime.com
Offers a large selection of Nordic cookery equipment and a limited selection of pantry items.

www.lindensweden.com
A wholesaler that carries some specialty Nordic baking equipment, like the *lefse* rolling pin.

www.marinamarket.com
Socks useful baking ingredients like Scandinavian dark syrup and baker's ammonia.

www.scandinavianfoodstore.com
Stocks fresh meats and seafood (like *fenalår*, *flaeskesteg*, *lutefisk* and smoked cod) as well as jams, candy and cookies from Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland. Also carries traditional waffle irons and *krumkake* irons.

www.scandinavian-south.com/cookware
Carries Nordic sweets, licorice, crispbreads, cookies and baking mixes.

AUSTRALIA

www.swedishgoodies.com.au
Stocks a mix of Nordic ingredients, confectionary, snacks and pantry basics as well as canned items like herring, crispbreads, cookies and mushrooms.

INTERNATIONAL

www.ikea.com
The food market offers fresh and packaged Swedish goods like lingonberry jam, Scandinavian ginger biscuits and *matjes* herring.

INDEX

A
æblekage 416
æblekompot 523
æbleskiver 305, 306
æblesuppe 521
äggakaka 230–1
äggkringlor 339, *351*
äggvåfflor 232
ahvenanmaan pannukakku 494
Ålandspannkaka 494
almonds
  almond and buttercream torte 452–3, *467*
  almond and butter egg-cream torte *449*, 468
  almond and toffee buns 270, *271*
  almond buns 268
  almond cookies 329
  almond meringues 356
  almond paste 531
  almond rusks 194
  almond sponge cake 408–9
  almond tart shells 42, 344, *351*
  almond tuiles 352
  almond wreath cake 462–3
  apple cake with nuts and pearl sugar 416–17, *421*
  bitter almond short buns 358
  cut almond shortbreads rolled in sugar 320, *321*
  Danish almond rice pudding 488
  Danish almond tart leavened with yeast *285*, 288–9
  Danish marzipan Napoleon hats 338
  Faroese green almond sponge cake *425*, 432
  filled Danish pastry braid 375, *377*
  Finnish almond and rum tortes 470
  Finnish quark pudding 490–1
  Finnish sticks *325*, 326
  frozen Daim cake 464–5
  gingerbread 330–1, *337*
  glazed almond tart 346
  glazed individual almond tarts 344–5, *351*
  glazed individual almond tarts, historical version 345
  glazed individual almond tarts with raspberry 345
  glazed individual almond tarts with tosca topping 346
  glazed individual gingerbread almond tarts 346
  glazed pastries with raspberries and almond paste 469
  julebolle 376, *377*
  karlsbader buns with almond paste filling 284, *285*
  krokan cake 359
  Mother Monsen's cake *421*, 422–3
  peasant shortbread cookies 318–19, *325*
  potato and almond cake 408
  rolled cake pastries 459
  saffron wheat buns with almond paste filling 278
  shortbread and almond tarts 346–7, *351*
  sponge cake glazed with almonds and caramel 410–11, *413*
  Swedish almond meringue torte 466, *467*
  Swedish Christmas toffee 392
  Swedish marzipan Napoleon hats 338–9
  sweet Shrove Tuesday buns from Norway, Finland and Sweden *281*, 282
  trekant *373*, 378
ambrosia cake 412, *413*
ambrosiakaka 412, *413*
Amerikanske pandekager 229
ammonium chloride liquorice 394
ankarstock 134–5
apelsinris 489
äppelbullar 270, *271*
äppelkaka 416
äppelkaka med mandelmassa, nötter och pärlsocker 416–17, *421*
äppelkräm 523
äppelmaräng 496
äppelmuffins med smul 367, *369*
äppelpannkaka 230
äppelsmulpaj 480
äppelsoppa 521
apple juice
  Finnish malt loaf 144
äpple- och kanelmuffins 367
apples
  apple and cinnamon muffins 367
  apple and cinnamon muffins with crumble 367, *369*
  apple cake 416
  apple cake with nuts and pearl sugar 416–17, *421*
  apple compote 523
  apple compote buns 270, *271*
  apple crumble 480
  apple meringue pudding 496
  apple soup 521
  Danish apple trifle 498
  Danish barley porridge with apple and raisins 246
  deep-fried sweet pastry from Savonlinna (Nyslott) 311
  individual Napoleon pastry in Sweden 472–3
  Norwegian apple cake 417
  Norwegian layered apple dessert 497
  poached apples stuffed with jam 525
  Scanian apple pie 482–3
  thick oven-baked pancake with apple 230
  upside down cake 418, *419*
apricots
  Pajala porridge 248
  soup of dried fruits 521
arme riddere 235
arrack 546
  chocolate cookie crumb balls flavoured with *arrack* 388
arraksbollar 388
ärtbröd 163, 164
ärtbulla 163
ástarpungar 306
ättika 540

B
bærkompot 524
baking powder
  Danish doughnuts, variation made with baking powder 306
  sugared pancakes leavened with baking powder 229
banana bread *413*, 415
banankaka *413*, 415
barkis 100, *103*
bärkräm 524
barley 25, 30–1, 150
  crushed barley porridge 243
barley flour 546
  barley flour and salt pork eggless pancakes *223*, 228
  barley flour porridge 243
  dry porridge made from barley flour 242–3
  Finnish barley flatbreads 178
  Finnish Lapland barley flatbreads 178
  Finnish milk flatbreads *171*, 175
  Norwegian barley pancakes 226
barley groat flatbreads *171*, 174–5
barselgraut 247
basser 372
beef
  deep-fried savoury pasties from Savonlinna (Nyslott) 211
  Finnish meat pasty made with puff pastry 210
beer
  Danish rye bread and beer soup 248–9
  Finnish beer soup 249
  Swedish beer soup 249
bergis 100, *103*
Berliininmunkit 304–5
Berlin crowns 339, *351*
Berlinare 304–5
Berlinerkransar 339, *351*
Berlinerkranser 339, *351*
Berlinermunkar 304–5
berries
  berry compote 524
  cold semolina and red berry porridge 244–5
  cold semolina with fresh berries 245
  cordials 512
  Danish berry dessert with cream 497
  jellied fruit cake 460–1
  rolled cake pastries 459
bilberry soup, sweet 522
birkes 374, *377*
blåbærsuppe 522
blåbärsmuffins 366–7
blåbärspaj 481
blåbärssoppa 522
black bread 142–3
blackcurrant jam
  King Gustav Adolf's pastry 494–5
  rye bread layer cake from Jylland *457*, 461
blind baking 72–3
blodbröd 164–5, *181*
blodpannekake 231
blodpannkaka 231
blood
  blood pancakes 231
  dried bread baked with blood 140
  serving bread baked with blood 140–1
  Swedish hard blood flatbreads 164–5, *181*
bløtkake 446
blueberries
  blueberry and sour cream pie 482
  blueberry muffins 366–7
  blueberry pie 481
  Danish berry dessert with cream 497
  rolled cake pastries 459
  sweet blueberry soup 522
boller 114–15
bondkakor 318–19, *325*
borgmesterstang 375, *377*
boys 275, *285*
braided buns and pastries
  braided buns 259
  cut roll braids 262, *262*
  filled braid 263, *263*
  filled Danish pastry braid 375, *377*
  saffron braid or wreath 278, *279*
brandy shortbread wreaths *341*, 323
brauðsúpa 500
brauðterta 206
breads 28, 29–30, 31, 40
  checking for doneness 64–6
  cooling 71
  history of 34–43
  how to knead dough 55–6
  leavening 61–2
  serving bread baked with blood 140–1
  basic graham bread 108–9, *139*
  basic wheat scones 119
  black bread 142–3
  buttermilk loaf 104
  camping bread 110, *111*
  Danish birthday buns *103*, 118
  Danish or Norwegian breakfast buns 116
  Danish rye bread 128, *133*
  Danish three-grain bread 109
  dried bread baked with blood 140
  Faroese rye bread 134
  Finnish malt loaf 144
  Finnish potato and rye loaf 143
  Finnish rye bread 130–1, *133*
  Finnish sweet-and-sour loaf *113*, 141
  French toast 235
  full grain scones 120–1
  golden syrup loaf *103*, 104
  graham buns 119, *139*
  Icelandic potato bread *103*, 106
  Icelandic unleavened rye flatbreads 134
  laputa bread 108
  Norwegian crescent buns 117
  Norwegian twice-baked bread 107
  Norwegian wholemeal loaf 102
  oat porridge loaf 107
  oat scones 120
  open-faced Danish 204, *205*
  overnight breakfast buns *103*, 116–17
  plain wheat loaf 100
  pomerans loaf 104
  potato loaf based on coarse rye flour and wheat flour 106
  potato loaf based on rye and wheat flour 105
  potato loaf based on wheat flour 105
  rolled oat teacakes 110
  rye and graham breads from Åland 142–3
  rye and pine bark bread 136–7
  rye and wheat flat loaves/cakes 137
  rye flour bread 122–45
  sandwich torte 206
  Scanian rye bread 128–9, *133*
  sifted rye and wheat rounds 138, *139*
  small wheat buns 115
  soda and cultured milk bread 114
  sourdough starter 540–1
  South Swedish loaf of scaled rye flour 108
  stone ground wheat breads from Åland 112, *113*
  Swedish navy rye loaf 134–5
  tea buns 118
  twist bread 110, *111*
  Upplandic rye bread *113*, 130
  wheat buns 114–15
  wheat-flour bread 90–121
  wheat loaf with poppy seeds 100, *103*
  wholemeal scones 120
  wort loaf 101, *103*
  see also flatbreads
brittatårta 466, *467*
brumari *127*, 132, *133*
brun formakaka *425*, 427
brun rullukaku 458–9
brunkager 330–1, *337*
brúnkaka *425*, 427
brunost 537
brunsviger 286, *287*
bruntorte *425*, 427
brysselkex 322
Budapest roll 456, *457*
Budapestrulle 456, *457*
Budapeststubbe 456, *457*
buns
  almond and toffee buns 270, *271*
  almond buns 268
  apple compote buns 270, *271*
  bitter almond short buns 358
  boys 275, *285*
  butter buns 273
  cardamom buns 272
  cinnamon bun cake 265, *267*
  cinnamon buns 264–5, *267*
  Danish birthday buns *103*, 118
  Danish or Norwegian breakfast buns 116
  Faroese cinnamon buns 266
  Finnish quark buns 274–5
  graham buns 119, *139*
  karlsbader buns with almond paste filling 284, *285*
  karlsbader dough 284
  Norwegian Christmas bread *285*, 288
  Norwegian crescent buns 117
  Norwegian custard and coconut buns 274
  Norwegian raisin buns 274
  open vanilla cream buns 268, *271*
  overnight breakfast buns *103*, 116–17
  plain sweet wheat buns 264
  rimbo buns *271*, 272–3
  saffron buns 42
  saffron wheat buns 276–7, *279*
  saffron wheat buns with almond paste filling 278
  saffron wheat buns with quark 277, *279*
  Saint Lucy's Day saffron buns 276, *279*
  shapes of buns 259–63
  small wheat buns 115
  sourdough 255–7
  super-fast, if-you-get-unexpected-guests buns 358
  sweet leavened wheat dough crescents with cinnamon filling 268–9
  sweet leavened wheat dough crescents with hazelnut filling 269, *271*
  sweet Shrove Tuesday buns from Denmark and Iceland *281*, 282–3
  sweet Shrove Tuesday buns from Norway, Finland and Sweden *281*, 282
  sweet Shrove Tuesday buns in milk *281*, 283
  sweet wheat bun dough, basic recipe 258
  sweet wheat bun dough, Leila's recipe 259
  sweet wheat bun dough, Tove's recipe 258
  tea buns 118
  vanilla cream buns 266, *267*
  wheat buns 114–15
butter
  almond and buttercream torte 452–3, *467*
  almond and butter egg-cream torte *449*, 468
  butter buns 273
  butter kringles 295
  buttercream 534
  chocolate buttercream 534
  Finnish egg butter 537
  Norwegian thick pancakes with or without buttercream 226–7
butterkaka 265, *267*
buttermilk
  barley groat flatbreads *171*, 174–5
  buttermilk loaf 104
bygg 514
byggmelsgrøt 243

byggmelslapper 226
byggrynsgrøt 243

C

cake pans, preparing 66–9
cakes 399–400
  checking for doneness 69–70
  cooling 71
  almond sponge cake 408–9
  almond wreath cake 462–3
  ambrosia cake 412, *413*
  apple cake 416
  apple cake with nuts and pearl sugar 416–17, *421*
  banana bread *413*, 415
  basic sponge cake 404–5, *425*
  basic sponge cake, slightly richer variation 405
  brown sugar yeast cake from Funen Island 286, *287*
  cardamom cake *403*, 424
  carrot cake 423
  chocolate and coconut glazed chocolate sponge cake 430, *431*
  chocolate, coffee and coconut glazed chocolate sponge cake 430
  chocolate cookie cake 462
  cinnamon bun cake 265, *267*
  coconut sponge cake 429
  coffee cake without coffee 415, *419*
  'the crowns' cake 408
  currant cake 420
  Danish spiced honey cake *421*, 426
  Danish sponge cake 406
  Danish sponge cake, contemporary recipe 410
  Danish sponge cake, historical recipe 409
  date cake with caramel sauce 422
  egg-white sponge cake 426–7
  Faroese green almond sponge cake *425*, 432
  filled sponge cake 406–7
  Finnish fudge layer cake 454–5
  Finnish sponge cake 414
  frozen Daim cake 464–5
  gingerbread cake *425*, 427
  glazed orange sponge cake with candied orange peel 412, *413*
  green marzipan layer cake 446–7, *449*
  Icelandic happy marriage cake 450
  Icelandic layer cake 450
  Icelandic layer cake, rolled out 451
  Icelandic layer cake, spread onto baking paper 450–1
  Icelandic layer cake with prune jam 452
  jellied fruit cake 460–1
  layer cakes 439, 446
  lemon moon cake 460
  light sponge cake with coconut frosting 428
  light sponge cake for layer cakes 446
  Maj's spring bites 432
  marble cake 410, *413*
  meringue layer cake 453
  Mother Monsen's cake *421*, 422–3
  Nordic sponge cakes 404
  Norwegian apple cake 417
  Norwegian marzipan layer cake 448, *449*
  old-fashioned Danish sponge cake 409
  pear cake with cardamom 414
  potato and almond cake 408
  potato starch sponge cake 407
  rice flour sponge cake 405, *419*
  rolled cake pastries 459
  saffron sponge cake 412
  sand cake 407
  Scanian festive cake baked on a skewer 491
  schwarzwald cake 464
  semolina sponge cake 420, *421*
  silver cake 426–7
  spiced honey cake 424, *425*
  sponge cake and butter icing squares with coconut 428–9
  sponge cake glazed with almonds and caramel 410–11, *413*
  strawberry layer cake 454
  Swedish gooey chocolate cake 432–3, *435*
  Swedish gooey chocolate cake made from white chocolate 433, *435*
  Swedish gooey lemon cake 434
  tiger cake 410, *413*
  tosca cake 410–11, *413*
  upside down cake 418, *419*
camping bread 110, *111*
candied peel
  Danish sponge cake, historical recipe 409
  Finnish quark pudding 490–1
  glazed orange sponge cake with candied orange peel 412, *413*
caramel
  caramel sauce 534–5
  date cake with caramel sauce 422
  rhubarb chewy caramel crumble 481
  slightly chewy cut caramel shortbreads 319, *321*
  sponge cake glazed with almonds and caramel 410–11, *413*
cardamom
cardamom buns 272
cardamom cake *403*, 424
Norwegian sweet pressed cardamom and vanilla tuiles 353
pear cake with cardamom 414
carrot cake 423
cat's tongue cookies *321*, 343
challah 40
cheese
  brown cheese 537
  Icelandic cultured fresh cheese 536
  sweet Norwegian flatbreads with brown cheese cream 174
  see also cream cheese
cherries
  Finnish quark pudding 490–1
  sweet cherry sauce 535
chessboard cookies 327, *341*
chocolate
  melting 80, 82–3
  tempering chocolate 78–80, *81*
  chocolate and coconut glazed chocolate sponge cake 430, *431*
  chocolate buttercream 534
  chocolate cigars 326
  chocolate, coffee and coconut glazed chocolate sponge cake 430
  chocolate cookie cake 462
  chocolate cookie crumb balls flavoured with *arrack* 388
  chocolate cookie crumb rolls flavoured with *punsch* *389*, 390
  chocolate cookie crumb balls flavoured with rum 390
  chocolate cuts *325*, 326–7
  chocolate ganache *421*, 426
  chocolate icing 530
  chocolate meringues 356, *357*
  chocolate oatmeal balls 388, *389*
  chocolate rolled torte *457*, 458
  chocolate roulade *457*, 458
  chocolate rusks 194–5
  chocolate sauce 534
  Danish cinnamon snail *373*, 374
  Danish marzipan Napoleon hats 338
  Finnish potato chocolate balls 390–1
  frozen Daim cake 464–5
  glazed pastries with raspberries and almond paste 469
  hazelnut and mandarin rolled torte 456, *457*
  Icelandic chocolate soup 500
  Icelandic Christmas cake 429
  King Gustav Adolf's pastry 494–5
  Leila's rocky road *389*, 391
  marble cake 410, *413*
  meringue cream puffs 328
  meringues, cream and chocolate sauce 495
  peppermint and chocolate pastilles *389*, 394
  rye bread layer cake from Jylland *457*, 461
  schwarzwald cake 464
  Swedish gooey chocolate cake 432–3, *435*
  Swedish gooey chocolate cake made from white chocolate 433, *435*
  Swedish gooey chocolate cake muffins *369*, 370
  sweet Shrove Tuesday buns from Denmark and Iceland *281*, 282–3
  tarts with chocolate filling and green icing 349
  tiger cake 410, *413*
chokladbollar 388, *389*
chokladcigarrer 326
chokladmaränger 356, *357*
chokladrulltårta med smörkräm *457*, 458
chokladskorpor 194–5
chokladsnittar *325*, 326–7
chokolade drømmekage 430, *431*
chokolade roulade *457*, 458
Christmas bread, Norwegian *285*, 288
Christmas cake, Icelandic 429
Christmas toffee, Swedish 392
cinnamon 75, 546
  apple and cinnamon muffins 367
  apple and cinnamon muffins with crumble 367, *369*
  cinnamon bun cake 265, *267*
  cinnamon buns 264–5, *267*
  cinnamon shortbreads *321*, 322
  cinnamon sugar 535
  Danish cinnamon snail *373*, 374
  Faroese cinnamon buns 266
  French toast 235
  sweet leavened wheat dough crescents with cinnamon filling 268–9
citronbullar 370
citronkladdkaka 434
citronmåne 460
cloudberries 546
  sugared cloudberries 514
the cockerel's crest *373*, 376
coconut
  chocolate and coconut glazed chocolate sponge cake 430, *431*
  chocolate, coffee and coconut glazed chocolate sponge cake 430
  coconut dreams 324, *325*
  coconut muffins 368, *369*
  coconut pyramids 324, *325*
  coconut sponge cake 429
  light sponge cake with coconut frosting 428
  Norwegian custard and coconut buns 274
  sponge cake and butter icing squares with coconut 428–9
coffee
  banana bread *413*, 415
  chocolate, coffee and coconut glazed chocolate sponge cake 430
  coffee cake without coffee 415, *419*
  Danish spiced honey cake *421*, 426
  Norwegian coffee mousse 498
  comb pastries, Finnish 370–1
compotes
  apple compote 523
  berry compote 524
  gooseberry compote 524
  Norwegian lingonberry compote 525
  prune compote 524–5
  rhubarb compote 524
cones 542
cookie crumbs
  chocolate cookie crumb balls flavoured with *arrack* 388
  chocolate cookie crumb rolls flavoured with *punsch* *389*, 390
  chocolate cookie crumb balls flavoured with rum 390
cookies 317
  almond cookies 329
  brandy shortbread wreaths *341*, 323
  cat's tongue cookies *321*, 343
  chessboard cookies 327, *341*
  chocolate cigars 326
  chocolate cookie cake 462
  chocolate cuts *325*, 326–7
  cinnamon shortbreads *321*, 322
  coconut dreams 324, *325*
  currant cookies 329
  cut almond shortbreads rolled in sugar 320, *321*
  cut oat cookies 328
  Douglas' shortbread cookies 318
  dreams 323
  Finnish spoon cookies 348–9
  Finnish sticks *325*, 326
  forked shortbreads 319
  gingerbread 330–1, *337*
  hazelnut tops 340
  Icelandic air cookies 340, *341*
  Icelandic syrup cookies 342
  Jewish cookies 342–3
  oat cookies with raisins 329
  peasant shortbread cookies 318–19, *325*
  peppernuts 336, *337*
  rye shortbreads *321*, 322–3
  Scanian thick and chewy gingersnaps 335
  shortbread 318
  shortbread cookies with meringue filling 320, *341*
  shortbread cookies with pink sugar 322
  slightly chewy cut caramel shortbreads 319, *321*
  Swedish marzipan Napoleon hats 338–9
  vanilla horns 340, *341*
cooling things down 71
Copenhagen birkes 375
cordial 512–13
  cordial soup 514
  cordial soup with oats or barley 514
  elderflower cordial 513
  making cordials Magnus's way 513
  making cordials in a pot on the stove 512
  making cordials in a steamer juicer 513
cottage cheese, saffron wheat buns with 277, *279*
crackers 185
  graham crackers 197
  oat crackers 196
  potato crackers *191*, 196–7
  rye crackers *191*, 196
cream
  crème anglaise 532
  crisp waffles 232, *233*
  curd cake from Hälsingland 492–3
  curd cake from Småland 492
  Danish almond rice pudding 488
  Danish apple trifle 498
  Danish berry dessert with cream 497
  Danish doughnuts, variation made with baking powder 306
  Danish thick cream pancakes 229
  Finnish fudge layer cake 454–5
  frozen Daim cake 464–5
  green marzipan layer cake 446–7, *449*
  hazelnut and mandarin rolled torte 456, *457*
  individual Napoleon pastry in Sweden 472–3
  King Gustav Adolf's pastry 494–5
  lingonberry cream 499
  medals 470–1
  meringues, cream and chocolate sauce 495
  Norwegian cloudberry cream 499
  Norwegian coffee mousse 498
  Norwegian cultured cream waffles 234
  Norwegian layered apple dessert 497
  Norwegian marzipan layer cake 448, *449*
  pancake torte 469
  pastry cream 533
  rice pudding for dessert 488
  rice pudding with orange 489
  rolled cake pastries 459
  rye bread layer cake from Jylland *457*, 461
  schwarzwald cake 464
  strawberries and cream 497
  strawberry layer cake 454
  Swedish Christmas toffee 392
  sweet Shrove Tuesday buns from Norway, Finland and Sweden *281*, 282
  uncooked vanilla cream 533
  vanilla custard 532, 533
cream cheese
  carrot cake 423
  sandwich torte 206
cream pies, lemon 474
cream puffs, meringue 328
crème anglaise 532
crisp rolls 190, *191*
crispbreads
  graham crispbread 178–9
  mixed seed crispbread 179
  Norwegian thin crispbreads baked from potato and oatmeal 173
  rye crispbreads 180, *181*
'the crowns' cake 408

crullers 42, 303, *307*, 308
  leavened crullers 309
  unleavened crullers 308
crumbles 479
  apple and cinnamon muffins with crumble 367, *369*
  apple crumble 480
  base recipe 480
  rhubarb chewy caramel crumble 481
curd cakes
  curd cake from Hälsingland 492–3
  curd cake from Småland 492
  Swedish curd cakes 491
currants
  currant cake 420
  currant cookies 329
custard
  Norwegian custard and coconut buns 274
  vanilla custard 532, 533
cut rolls 262, 262
  cut roll braids 262, *262*

D
Daim cake, frozen 464–5
Daimtårta 464–5
dammsugare *389*, 390
danakaka 406–7
Danish almond rice pudding 488
Danish almond tart leavened with yeast *285*, 288–9
Danish apple trifle 498
Danish barley porridge with apple and raisins 246
Danish berry dessert with cream 497
Danish birthday buns *103*, 118
Danish breakfast buns 116
Danish cinnamon snail *373*, 374
Danish doughnuts 305
  variation made with baking powder 306
Danish glazed raspberry squares 348, *351*
Danish marzipan Napoleon hats 338
Danish pastries 372
  Danish pastry fillings 530
  Danishes filled with vanilla custard and raspberry jam *377*, 378–9
  filled Danish pastry braid 375, *377*
  filled poppy seed Danish 375
  poppy seed Danish 374, *377*
Danish rye bread 128, *133*
Danish rye bread and beer soup 248–9
Danish spiced honey cake *421*, 426
Danish sponge cake 406
  contemporary recipe 410
  historical recipe 409
  old-fashioned recipe 409
Danish sweet kringle 294–5, *297*
Danish thick cream pancakes 229
Danish three-grain bread 109
Danska munkar 305, 306
date cake with caramel sauce 422
Davidsen, Oskar 204, *205*
döðluterta með karamellusósu 422
dogges Syltkakor 318
doneness, checking for
  bread 64–6
  cakes 69–70
dough, how to knead 55–6
doughnuts 304
  Danish doughnuts 305
  Danish doughnuts, variation made with baking powder 306
  deep-fried and filled doughnuts 304–5
  Icelandic deep-fried doughnut balls 306
Douglas' shortbread cookies 318
dreams 323
  coconut dreams 324, *325*
dried fruit
  Norwegian Christmas bread *285*, 288
  soda and cultured milk bread 114
  soup of dried fruit 521
  see also currants; raisins, *etc*
drinks
  alcohol-free glögg 540
  cordials 512–13
  Magnus's glögg 539
  mulled wine 538–9
drömmar 323
drömtårta *457*, 458
dyrlægens natmad 204, *205*

E
eclairs 465
eggedosis 496
eggs
  almond and buttercream torte 452–3, *467*
  almond and butter egg-cream torte *449*, 468
  apple meringue pudding 496
  crème anglaise 532
  egg kringles 339, *351*
  egg waffles 232
  egg washes 73–4
  egg-white sponge cake 426–7
  Finnish egg butter 537
  hazelnut and mandarin rolled torte 456, *457*
  krokan cake 359
  meringue layer cake 453
  meringues 355
  Mother Monsen's cake *421*, 422–3
  Norwegian marzipan layer cake 448, *449*
  Norwegian thick salt pork pancakes 228
  Norwegian waffles 234
  Norwegian wheat pancakes 225
  oven-baked Scanian egg cake 230–1
  pastry cream 533
  raw eggs and sugar 496
  rye bread layer cake from Jylland *457*, 461
  Swedish almond meringue torte 466, *467*
  thin pancakes 224
  vanilla custard 472–3, 532, 533
elderberry cordial 513
  King Gustav Adolf's pastry 494–5
eplakaka 416
eplekake 417
equipment
  flatbread-making 151–3, 158–9
  stand mixers 55, *57*, 83, *84–5*

F
Faroese brown rolled torte/roulade 458–9
Faroese cinnamon buns 266
Faroese green almond sponge cake *425*, 432
Faroese rye bread 134
Faroese tuiles 354
Faroese waffles 235
fastelavnsbolle *281*, 282–3
fastlavnsbolle *281*, 282
fats, rendered animal 538
fattiga riddare 235
fattigmann *307*, 308
fika 44–9, 317
filmjölkslimpa 114
Finnish almond and rum tortes 470
Finnish barley flatbreads 178
Finnish beer soup 249
Finnish comb pastries 370–1
Finnish egg butter 537
Finnish sour rye rusks 193
Finnish fudge 534–5
Finnish fudge layer cake 454–5
Finnish fudge pie 483
Finnish Lapland barley flatbreads 178
Finnish lemon muffins/buns 370
Finnish malt loaf 144
Finnish May Day funnel cakes 310–11
Finnish meat pasty made with puff pastry 210
Finnish milk flatbreads *171*, 175
Finnish oven porridge 246
Finnish potato and rye loaf 143
Finnish potato chocolate balls 390–1
Finnish potato flatbreads 175
Finnish potato pearl porridge 245
Finnish puff pastry and plum stars 371
Finnish quark buns 274–5
Finnish quark pudding 490–1
Finnish rye bread 130–1, *133*
Finnish rye malt pudding 490
Finnish salmon pasty *203*, 212
Finnish sponge cake 414
Finnish spoon cookies 348–9
Finnish sticks *325*, 326
Finnish sweet-and-sour loaf *113*, 141
Finnish water kringles *297*, 298
Finsk breud *325*, 326
Finska pinnar *325*, 326
Finskbrød *325*, 326
fish
  Finnish salmon pasty *203*, 212
  Icelandic fish pancakes 225
  sandwich torte 206
fisklummur 225
fläderblomssaft 513
fläskpannkaka 230
flatbrauð 134
flatbreads 40, 149–81
  equipment 151–3, 158–9
  barley groat flatbreads *171*, 174–5
  Finnish barley flatbreads 178
  Finnish Lapland barley flatbreads 178
  Finnish milk flatbreads *171*, 175
  Finnish potato flatbreads 175
  flatbreads from Hardanger 168
  folded flatbread sandwich 207
  graham crispbread 178–9
  griddled rye breads filled with semolina or rice porridge 168–9
  griddled sweet Norwegian flatbreads 165
  griddled sweet Norwegian flatbreads with glaze 166
  Icelandic leaf bread 176
  Icelandic potato flatbreads 169
  Icelandic soft rye flatbreads 169
  Icelandic unleavened rye flatbreads 134
  Icelandic wheat cakes from Westfjord 170
  mixed seed crispbread 179
  Norwegian crisp flatbreads 172–3
  Norwegian griddled soft potato flatbreads 166–7, *171*
  Norwegian thick flatbreads 167, *171*
  Norwegian thin crispbreads baked from potato and oatmeal 173
  pea flour flatbreads 164
  rye crispbreads 180, *181*
  Sami soft flatbreads 170, *171*
  soft pea flour flatbreads 163
  soft potato flatbreads from Dalarna 162–3
  soft wheat and rye cakes 161, *171*
  Swedish hard blood flatbreads 164–5, *181*
  Swedish soft or hard flatbreads 160–1, *181*
  sweet Norwegian flatbreads with brown cheese cream 174
flatbrød 172–3
flatkaka 134
flatkökur 169
fleskepannekaker 228
flødeboll *314*, 328
flødepandekager 229
flottyr 538
fløyelsgrøt 247
fødselsdagsboller *103*, 118
fortinnagraut 247
franskbrød 100
frasvåfflor 232, *233*
fredrikatårta 470
French toast 235
fröknäcke 179
frosting, coconut 428
frugt suppe 521
fruit
  cordials 512
  jam 510
  jellied fruit cake 460–1
  rolled cake pastries 459
  upside down cake 418, *419*
  see also berries; lemons, *etc*
fruktsoppa 521
frukttårta i gelé 460–1
fudge
  Finnish fudge 534–5
  Finnish fudge layer cake 454–5
  Finnish fudge pie 483
fullkornsscones 120
funnel cakes, Finnish May Day 310–11

G
gaahkoeh 170, *171*
gaffelkakor 319
gahkku 40
gáhkku 170, *171*
gammeldags æblekage 498
ganache, chocolate *421*, 426
gelatine 76–8
gerkringla 294–5, *297*
gifflar med hasselnötter 269, *271*
gifflar med kanel 268–9
gingerbread 330–1, *337*
  gingerbread cake *425*, 427
  gingerbread house 331–3
  gingerbread muffins 366
  glazed individual gingerbread almond tarts 346
gingersnaps, Scanian thick and chewy 335
glaskringlor *297*, 298
glass kringles *297*, 298
gliadin 27–8
glödkaka 170, *171*
gløgg 538–40
glögg 538–40
glögi 538–40
gluten 27–8, 29, 30, 31, 32, 55
glutenin 27–8
góðaráð 354
golden syrup 548
  dried bread baked with blood 140
  Finnish malt loaf 144
  Finnish rye malt pudding 490
  Finnish sweet-and-sour loaf *113*, 141
  gingerbread 330–1, *337*
  golden syrup loaf *103*, 104
  Icelandic rye bread *127*, 132, *133*
  Icelandic syrup cookies 342
  rye and wheat flat loaves/cakes 137
  Scanian thick and chewy gingersnaps 335
  soft potato flatbreads from Dalarna 162–3
gooseberries
  gooseberry compote 524
  gooseberry soup 522
goro 353
göteborgare 469
Gotländsk saffranspannkaka 493
Gotlandspannkaka 493
gräddbullar 328
graham flour 548
  basic graham bread recipe 108–9, *139*
  Finnish sour rye rusks 193
  graham buns 119, *139*
  graham crackers 197
  graham crispbread 178–9
  graham rusks 190
  rye and graham breads from Åland 142–3
grahamsboller 119, *139*
grahamsbröd 108–9
grahamsbullar 119, *139*
grahamskex 197
grahamsknäcke 178–9
grahamsskorpor 190
grains
  grain soups 239–40
  see also individual types of grain
gravlax
  Finnish salmon pasty *203*, 212
green marzipan layer cake 446–7, *449*
grislabrød 107
grønakaka *425*, 432
grötbröd 107
grova scones 120–1
grove havrepannekaker 226
gul sagosuppe 520
Gustav Adolfsbakelse 494–5

H
håkonkakor 320, *321*
håkonskager 320, *321*
håkonskaker 320, *321*
hålkakor 137
hälsingeostkaka 492–3
hanekam *373*, 376
hapankorput 193
hapanvelli 248
hardangerkake 168
hastbullar 358
havrebrød 107
havreflarn 354–5
havregrød 242
havregrøt 242
havregrynsgröt 242
havregrynskugler 388, *389*
havregrynsvälling 250
havrekakor med russin 329
havrekex 196
havrenmuffins 368, *369*
havrescones 120
havresnittar 328
hazelnuts
  apple cake with nuts and pearl sugar 416–17, *421*
  chocolate cigars 326
  hazelnut and mandarin rolled torte 456, *457*
  hazelnut tops 340
  jellied fruit cake 460–1
  Norwegian marzipan layer cake 448, *449*
  schwarzwald cake 464
  soda and cultured milk bread 114
  sweet leavened wheat dough crescents with hazelnut filling 269, *271*
  tuiles fried in a Swedish small pancake griddle 354
Helmipuuro 245
hemvete 112, *113*
hetvägg *281*, 283
hindbærsnitter 348, *351*
hjalskaka 462
hjonabandssaela 450

honey
  Danish spiced honey cake *421*, 426
  spiced honey cake 424, *425*
honningkake 424, *425*
honninskage *421*, 426
hönö cakes 161, *171*
hönökaka 161, *171*
horn 117
hovdessert 495
hræringur 247
hrökkbrauð 180, *181*
hverabrauð *127*, 132, *133*
hveteboller 114–15
hvit dame 448, *449*
hyldeblomstsaft 513
hylleblomstsaft 513

I
ice cream, vanilla 534
Icelandic air cookies 340, *341*
Icelandic bread soup 500
Icelandic chocolate soup 500
Icelandic Christmas cake 429
Icelandic cultured fresh cheese 536
Icelandic deep-fried doughnut balls 306
Icelandic fish pancakes 225
Icelandic happy marriage cake 450
Icelandic layer cake 450
  Icelandic layer cake with prune jam 452
  rolled out version 451
  spread onto baking paper version 450–1
Icelandic leaf bread 176–7
Icelandic oatmeal pancakes 224–5
Icelandic potato bread *103*, 106
Icelandic potato flatbreads 169
Icelandic rye bread *127*, 132, *133*
Icelandic *skyr* and porridge mix 247
Icelandic soft rye flatbreads 169
Icelandic syrup cookies 342
Icelandic thick pancakes/pan-fried bread 227
Icelandic unleavened rye flatbreads 134
Icelandic waffles 234–5
Icelandic wheat cakes from Westfjord 170
icings
  butter icing 428–9
  chocolate icing 530
  white icing 530

J
jam 510
  Douglas' shortbread cookies 318
  Icelandic layer cake, rolled out 451
  Icelandic layer cake, spread onto baking paper 450–1
  jam squares with oatmeal 434
  jellied fruit cake 460–1
  pancake torte 469
  poached apples stuffed with jam 525
  prune jam 452
  rye bread layer cake from Jylland *457*, 461
jellied fruit cake 460–1
jellies 511
Jewish cookies 342–3
jitterbuggare 320, *341*
jødekager 342–3
jødekakor 342–3
jødekakur 342–3
jólagrautu 242
jólakaka 429
jordbær med fløde 497
jordgubbar med grädde 497
jordgubbsgräddtårta 454
joulutorttu 371
judebröd 342–3
julebolle 376, *377*
julekake *285*, 288
julevørterbrød 102
julgröt 242
julstjärnor 371

K
kääretorttu 455, *457*
kaffefromasj 498
kaffekaka 415, *419*
kake med gul grem 452–3, *467*
kakósúpa 500
kaljakeitto 249
källarfranska 114–15
kalljästa frukostbullar *103*, 116–17
kammarjunkere 195
kamnisu 370–1
kampanisu 370–1
kanelbullar 264–5
kanelkakor *321*, 322
kanelsnegl 264–5
kanelsnurr 264–5
karamelsovs 534–5
kardemummakaka *403*, 424
kardemummabullar 272
Karelian pasties 208–9
karjalanpiirakat 208–9
kärleksmums 430, *431*
karlsbader buns with almond paste filling 284, *285*
karlsbader dough 284
karlsbaderbullar 284, *285*
karlsbaderdeg 284
kärnmjölkslimpa 104
kartöflubrauð *103*, 106
kartöfluflatbrauð 169
katalaner 345
katrinplommonkräm 524–5
kattungar *321*, 343
kattungor *321*, 343
kaurapuuro 242
kavring 41, 128–9, *133*
kavringer 190, *191*
keikauskakku 418, *419*
kejsarkronor 346–7, *351*
kiisseli 524
King Gustav Adolf's pastry 494–5
kinuski 534–5
kinuskikakku 454–5
kirsebærsauce 535
kissankielet 343
kladdkaka 432–3, *435*
kladdkaksmuffins *369*, 370
klämma 207
klappgröt 244–5
kleina *307*, 308
klejner *307*, 308
klenäter *307*, 308
kleynur *307*, 308
knäck 392
knäckebröd 180, *181*
knäckig rabarberpaj 481
knækbrød 180, *181*
kneippbrød 102
knekkbreyð 180, *181*
knekkebrød 180, *181*
knotted buns 260, *260*
kokosdrömmar 324, *325*
kokoskaka 429
kokosmuffins 368, *369*
kokostoppar 324, *325*
kokostopper 324, *325*
kolakakor 319, *321*
kolasnittar 319, *321*
kolbullar *223*, 228
konjakskransar *321*, 323
Köpenhamnsbirkes 375
korintkaka 420
korintkake 420
korintkakor 329
kornmjölsgröt 243
korput 190, *191*
korvapuustit 264–5
köyhät ritarit 235
krabbelurer 229
kransekage 462–3
kransekake 462–3
krinalefse 166
kringles 294
  butter kringles 295
  Danish sweet kringle 294–5, *297*
  egg kringles 339, *351*
  Finnish water kringles *297*, 298
  glass kringles *297*, 298
  kringles from Viipuri 299
  potato kringles 342
  Swedish sugared sweet kringles 296, *297*
krokaani 359
krokan 359
krokan cake 359
kronans kaka 408
krotekake 168
krumkaker 352–3
krusbärskräm 524
krusbärssoppa 522
kryddiga muffins 366
Kung Oscars tårta *449*, 468
kvargbullar 274–5

L
lagkage 446
lagkaka 446
lapper 225
laputa bread 108
laputabröd 108
laskiaispullat *281*, 282
laufabrauð 39, 176
laxpirog 212
layer cakes 439, 446
  Finnish fudge layer cake 454–5
  green marzipan layer cake 446–7, *449*
  Icelandic layer cake 450
  Icelandic layer cake, rolled out version 451
  Icelandic layer cake, spread onto baking paper version 450–1
  Icelandic layer cake with prune jam 452
  jellied fruit cake 460–1
  light sponge cake for layer cakes 446
  meringue layer cake 453
  Norwegian marzipan layer cake 448, *449*
  rye bread layer cake from Jylland *457*, 461
  strawberry layer cake 454
leaf bread, Icelandic 176
leavening 61–2
Leila's rocky road *389*, 391
lemons
  elderflower cordial 513
  Finnish lemon muffins/buns 370
  lemon cream pies 474
  lemon moon cake 460
  Swedish gooey lemon cake 434
lettujalräiskäleitä 224
lihalevy 210
lihapasteija 210
lihapiirakka 209, 210
lingonberries 549
  gingerbread cake *425*, 427
  lingonberries preserved in water 515
  lingonberry cream 499
  Norwegian light lingonberry mousse 499
  Norwegian lingonberry compote 525
  open-faced lingonberry and potato pasties 207
  sugared lingonberries 514–15
lingonberry jam
  gingerbread muffins 366
lingongrädde 499
linseeds
  soda and cultured milk bread 114
  mixed seed crispbread 179
  Pajala porridge 248
  rolled rye flake porridge 244
  wholemeal scones 120
linser 474
liquorice, ammonium chloride 394
loff 100
loftkøkur 340, *341*
lopipiirakka *203*, 212
lörtsy 211, 311
love balls 306
Luciapullat 276, *279*
lummur 224–5
lusikkaleivät 348–9
Lussebulle 276, *279*
Lussekatt 276, *279*
Lussekatter 276, *279*
luumukiisseli 524–5
lys remonce 530

M
M-cakes 330–3
M-kakor 330–3
Magnus's glögg 539
maitorieska *171*, 175
Maj's spring bites 432
majs vårbitar 432
mallaslimppul 144
malt loaf, Finnish 144
maltlimpa 144
mämmi 490
mandarins
  hazelnut and mandarin rolled torte 456, *457*
mandelbiskvier 329
mandelbullar 268
mandelflarn 352
mandelkage 408–9
mandelkaka 408–9
mandelkubb 358
mandelmaränger 356
mandelmusslor 344, *351*
mandelskorpor 194
mannagrynsgröt 244
mannagrynskaka 420, *421*
mannagrynspudding 489
mannagrynsvälling 250
mannapuuro 244
maräng 355
marängsviss 495
marängtårta 453
marble cake 410, *413*
marengs kys 355
marengslagkage 453
marenki 355
marmorkage 410, *413*
marshmallows
  Leila's rocky road *389*, 391
marzipan 532
  almond wreath cake 462–3
  chocolate cookie crumb rolls flavoured with *punsch* *389*, 390
  Danish marzipan Napoleon hats 338
  green marzipan layer cake 446–7, *449*
  lemon moon cake 460
  Norwegian marzipan layer cake 448, *449*
  Swedish marzipan Napoleon hats 338–9
mayonnaise 537
mazarin torte 346
mazariner 344–5, *351*
mazariner, äldre recept 345
mazarintårta 346
measuring 86–8
meat
  elongated loaf-like Finnish meat pasty 210
  Finnish meat pasty made with puff pastry 210
  meat pasties 209
  see also beef; salt pork
medaljer 470–1
medals 470–1
meesjuusto 537
mehu 512
mehukeitto 521
melkegrøt 247
memma 490
meringues 355
  almond meringues 356
  apple meringue pudding 496
  chocolate meringues 356, *357*
  meringue cream puffs 328
  meringue layer cake 453
  meringues, cream and chocolate sauce 495
  Norwegian marzipan layer cake 448, *449*
  shortbread cookies with meringue filling 320, *341*
  striped peppermint candy meringues 356
  Swedish almond meringue torte 466, *467*
mesost 537
messmör 536
milk
  crème anglaise 532
  crushed barley porridge 243
  curd cake from Hälsingland 492–3
  curd cake from Småland 492
  Finnish beer soup 249
  Finnish milk flatbreads *171*, 175
  Finnish oven porridge 246
  Finnish potato pearl porridge 245
  griddled sweet Norwegian flatbreads with glaze 166
  Icelandic chocolate soup 500
  Icelandic cultured fresh cheese 536
  Karelian pasties 208–9
  kringles from Viipuri 299
  milk porridge 247
  Norwegian sour cream porridge 246–7
  pastry cream 533
  rice grain soup 250
  rice porridge 242
  rolled oat grain soup 250
  sago pearl milk soup 520–1
  semolina grain soup 250
  semolina oven pancake from Åland 494
  semolina pudding 489
  soda and cultured milk bread 114
  soft pea flour flatbreads 163
  soft potato flatbreads from Dalarna 162–3
  sweet Norwegian flatbreads with brown cheese cream 174
  sweet Shrove Tuesday buns in milk *281*, 283
  thick oven-baked pancake 230
  thin pancakes 224
  vanilla custard 472–3, 532, 533
  velvet grain soup 250
  wheat semolina and milk porridge 244
mintkyssar *389*, 394
mixers, stand 55, *57*, 83, *84–5*
mjuk pepparkaka *425*, 427
mjukbröd 160–1, *181*
mjukbrød 166–7 *171*
mjukt tunnbröd med potatis 162–3
mockabitar 430
mokkabitar i skuffu 430, *431*
mokkaruudut 430, *431*
Mor Monsen *421*, 422–3
mördeg 318
mørk remonce 530
morotskaka 423
møsbrømlefse 174
Mother Monsen's cake *421*, 422–3
mousses
  Norwegian coffee mousse 498
  Norwegian light lingonberry mousse 499
muffins 363
  apple and cinnamon muffins 367
  apple and cinnamon muffins with crumble 367, *369*
  basic recipe 366, *369*
  blueberry muffins 366–7
  coconut muffins 368, *369*
  Finnish lemon muffins/buns 370
  gingerbread muffins 366
  oat muffins 368, *369*
  Swedish gooey chocolate cake muffins *369*, 370
muffins, grundrecept 366, *369*
mulled wine 538–9
  alcohol-free glögg 540
  Magnus's glögg 539
multekrem 499
munavoi 537
munkar 304

munker 305
munkit 304
mustaleipä 142–3
mustikkakeitto 522
mustikkapiirakka 482
mutti 242–3
myseost 537
mysingur 536
mysost 537
mysostur 537

N
nævagraut 242–3
näkkilepa 180, *181*
Napoleon hats
  Danish marzipan Napoleon hats 338
  Swedish marzipan Napoleon hats 338–9
Napoleon pastry in Sweden, individual 472–3
Napoleonbakelse 472–3
Napoleonhattar 338–9
Napoleonskake 472–3
nävgröt 242–3
nisu 370–1
Nordic sponge cakes 404
Norwegian apple cake 417
Norwegian barley pancakes 226
Norwegian breakfast buns 116
Norwegian Christmas bread *285*, 288
Norwegian cloudberry cream 499
Norwegian coffee mousse 498
Norwegian crescent buns 117
Norwegian crisp flatbreads 172
Norwegian cultured cream waffles 234
Norwegian custard and coconut buns 274
Norwegian griddled soft potato flatbreads 166–7, *171*
Norwegian griddled sweet flatbreads 165
Norwegian griddled sweet flatbreads with glaze 166
Norwegian layered apple dessert 497
Norwegian layered porridge 247
Norwegian light lingonberry mousse 499
Norwegian lingonberry compote 525
Norwegian marzipan layer cake 448, *449*
Norwegian oat pancakes 226
Norwegian raisin buns 274
Norwegian rye and wholemeal rusks 192–3
Norwegian sour cream porridge 246–7
Norwegian sweet pressed cardamom and vanilla tuiles 353
Norwegian thick flatbreads 167, *171*
Norwegian thick pancakes with or without buttercream 226–7
Norwegian thick salt pork pancakes 228
Norwegian thin crispbreads baked from potato and oatmeal 173
Norwegian tuiles 352–3
Norwegian twice-baked bread 107
Norwegian version of wort loaf 102
Norwegian waffles 234
Norwegian wheat flour and butter porridge 247
Norwegian wheat pancakes 225
Norwegian wholemeal loaf 102
nöttoppar 340
nougat
  Danish marzipan Napoleon hats 338
nuts
  apple cake with nuts and pearl sugar 416–17, *421*
  see also almonds; hazelnuts, *etc*
nypesuppe 523
nyponsoppa 523

O
oatmeal
  Norwegian oat pancakes 226
  Norwegian thin crispbreads baked from potato and oatmeal 173
oats 25, 32–3
  chocolate oatmeal balls 388, *389*
  cordial soup with oats or barley 514
  crumble, base recipe 480
  cut oat cookies 328
  Danish or Norwegian breakfast buns 116
  dry porridge made from toasted oat or barley flour 242–3
  forked shortbreads 319
  Icelandic happy marriage cake 450
  Icelandic oatmeal pancakes 224–5
  jam squares with oatmeal 434
  oat cookies with raisins *32*, 329
  oat crackers 196
  oat muffins 368, *369*
  oat porridge loaf 107
  oat scones 120
  oat tuiles 354–5
  Pajala porridge 248
  rhubarb chewy caramel crumble 481
  rolled oat grain soup 250
  rolled oat porridge 242
  rolled oat teacakes 110
ohrarieska 178
øllebrød 248–9
ölsupa 249
onnegraut 247
oranges
  glazed orange sponge cake with candied orange peel 412, *413*
  rice pudding with orange 489
Oscar IIs tårta 449, 468
Oscar II's torte *449*, 468
Oscarstårta 449, 468
ostkaka 491
oven pancakes
  rice and saffron oven pancake from Gotland 493
  semolina oven pancake from Åland 494
oven pudding 246
ovens 62–3, 151–2
overnight breakfast buns *103*, 116–17

P
Pajala porridge 248
pajalagröt 248
paltbröd 140
pancakes 221
  barley flour and salt pork eggless pancakes *223*, 228
  blood pancakes 231
  Danish thick cream pancakes 229
  Icelandic fish pancakes 225
  Icelandic oatmeal pancakes 224–5
  Icelandic thick pancakes/pan-fried bread 227
  Norwegian barley pancakes 226
  Norwegian oat pancakes 226
  Norwegian thick pancakes with or without buttercream 226–7
  Norwegian thick salt pork pancakes 228
  Norwegian wheat pancakes 225
  pancake torte 469
  rice and saffron oven pancake from Gotland 493
  sugared pancakes leavened with baking powder 229
  thick oven-baked pancake 230
  thick oven-baked pancake with apple 230
  thick oven-baked salt pork pancake 230
  thin pancakes 224
pandekage 224
pannekaker 224
pannkakstårta 469
pannukakur 224
päronkaka med kardemumma 414
pasha 490–1
pasties
  deep-fried savoury pasties from Savonlinna (Nyslott) 211
  elongated loaf-like Finnish meat pasty 210
  Finnish meat pasty made with puff pastry 210
  Finnish salmon pasty *203*, 212
  Karelian pasties 208–9
  meat pasties 209
  open-faced lingonberry and potato pasties 207
pastilles, peppermint and chocolate *389*, 394
pastries *307*, 308, 317
  brown sugar pastry filling 530
  the cockerel's crest *373*, 376
  Danish cinnamon snail *373*, 374
  Danish glazed raspberry squares 348, *351*
  Danish marzipan Napoleon hats 338
  Danish pastry 372
  Danish pastry fillings 530
  Danishes filled with vanilla custard and raspberry jam *377*, 378–9
  deep-fried pastries 303
  deep-fried sweet pastry from Savonlinna (Nyslott) 311
  filled Danish pastry braid 375, *377*
  filled poppy seed Danish 375
  Finnish comb pastries 370–1
  Finnish May Day funnel cakes 310–11
  Finnish puff pastry and plum stars 371
  glazed pastries with raspberries and almond paste 469
  individual Napoleon pastry in Sweden 472–3
  julebolle 376, *377*
  King Gustav Adolf's pastry 494–5
  krokan cake 359
  leavened crullers 309
  poppy seed Danish 374, *377*
  rosenbrød 378
  rosettes *307*, 310
  rungstedkage 285, 288–9
  spandauer *373*, 374
  trekant *373*, 378
  unleavened crullers 308
  water pastries 465
  white sugar pastry filling 530
pastry
  blind baking 72–3
  basic pie crust, sweet 543
  see also puff pastry
pastry cream 533
  vanilla 265, *267*
pea flour 549
  pea flour flatbreads 164
  soft pea flour flatbreads 163
peanuts
  Leila's rocky road *389*, 391
pearl barley
  cordial soup with oats or barley 514
  Danish barley porridge with apple and raisins 246
  Finnish oven porridge 246
pear cake with cardamom 414
peas
  rye sourdough, potato and pea soup from Virolahti 248
peasant shortbread cookies 318–19, *325*
pebernødder 336, *337*
pehmeä maustekekku 425, 427
pepparkakor 330–1, *337*
pepparkaksmazariner 346
pepparnötter 336, *337*
peppercorns 75
pepperkaker 330–1, *337*
peppermint oil
  peppermint and chocolate pastilles *389*, 394
peppermint sticks 392–3
  striped peppermint candy meringues 356
peppernøtter 336, *337*
peppernuts 336, *337*
perunaleivos 390–1
perunalimppu 143
perunarieska 175
pettuleipä 136–7
pies 479
  basic sweet pie crust 543
  blind baking 72–3
  blueberry and sour cream pie 482
  blueberry pie 481
  Finnish fudge pie 483
  lemon cream pies 474
  Scanian apple pie 482–3
piimälimppu 104
pikekyss 355
pine bark flour 136
  rye and pine bark bread 136–7
pinnbröd 110, *111*
pinocchiotårta 466, *467*
piparkakut 330–1, *337*
piparkökur 330–1, *337*
pistachios
  Leila's rocky road *389*, 391
pizza 216–17
  basic pizza dough 217
pizzadeg 217
plättbakelser 354
plum jam
  Finnish puff pastry and plum stars 371
pojkar 275, *285*
polkagrisar 392–3
polkagrismaränger 356
polyneér 346–7, *351*
pomerans loaf 104
pomeranslimpa 104
poppy seeds
  filled poppy seed Danish 375
  poppy seed Danish 374, *377*
  wheat loaf with poppy seeds 100, *103*
pork
  barley flour and salt pork eggless pancakes *223*, 228
  dry porridge made from toasted oat or barley flour 242–3
  fried salt pork 538
  Norwegian thick salt pork pancakes 228
  oven-baked Scanian egg cake 230–1
  salt pork 550
  salt pork baked in the oven 538
  salt pork fried in the pan 538
  thick oven-baked salt pork pancake 230
porridge 239–40
  barley flour porridge 243
  cold semolina and red berry porridge 244–5
  cold semolina with fresh berries 245
  crushed barley porridge 243
  dry porridge made from toasted oat or barley flour 242–3
  Finnish oven porridge 246
  Finnish potato pearl porridge 245
  Icelandic skyr and porridge mix 247
  milk porridge 247
  Norwegian layered porridge 247
  Norwegian sour cream porridge 246–7
  Norwegian wheat flour and butter porridge 247
  Pajala porridge 248
  rice porridge 242
  rolled oat porridge 242
  rolled rye flake porridge 244
  rye flour porridge 244
  wheat semolina and milk porridge 244
pösplättar 229
potatisbakelse 390–1
potatisbröd 105
potatisbröd med råg 106
potatisbröd med vetemjöl 105
potatiskex 191, 196–7
potatiskringlor 342
potatislimpa 105
potato pearls 548
  Finnish potato pearl porridge 245
potato starch sponge cake 407
potatoes
  Finish potato flatbreads 175
  Finnish potato and rye loaf 143
  Icelandic fish pancakes 225
  Icelandic potato bread *103*, 106
  Icelandic potato flatbreads 169
  Karelian pasties 208–9
  Norwegian griddled soft potato flatbreads 166–7, *171*
  Norwegian thin crispbreads baked from potato and oatmeal 173
  open-faced lingonberry and potato pasties 207
  potato and almond cake 408
  potato crackers *191*, 196–7
  potato kringles 342
  potato loaf based on coarse rye flour and wheat flour 106
  potato loaf based on rye and wheat flour 105
  potato loaf based on wheat flour 105
  rye sourdough, potato and pea soup from Virolahti 248
  soft potato flatbreads from Dalarna 162–3
potetbrød 105
potetlefse 166–7, *167*
potetlompe 166–7, *171*
prim 536
princess torte 446–7, *449*
prinsesstårta 446–7, *449*
prunes
  Pajala porridge 248
  prune compote 524–5
  prune jam 452
  red sago pearl soup 520
  soup of dried fruits 521
  sweet-and-sour prune and rice soup from Trondheim 251
  yellow sago pearl soup 520
puff pastry 542–3
  Finnish meat pasty made with puff pastry 210

  - Finnish puff pastry and plum stars 371
  - Finnish salmon pasty *203*, 212
  - individual Napoleon pastry in Sweden 472–3
- *punsch*, chocolate cookie crumb rolls flavoured with *389*, 390

Q

- **Quark**
  - Finnish fudge layer cake 454–5
  - Finnish quark buns 274–5
  - Finnish quark pudding 490–1
  - King Gustav Adolf's pastry 494–5
  - saffron wheat buns with quark 277, *279*

R

- *rabarberkompot* 524
- *rabarberkräm* 524
- *rabarbersoppa* 522
- *rabarbersuppe* 522
- *rabarbrasuppe* 522
- *radiokaka* 462
- *rågflingegröt* 244
- *rågkex* *191*, 196
- *rågmjölsgröt* 244
- *rågsiktskakor* 138, *139*
- *rågskorpor* *191*, 192
- *rahkapullat* 274–5
- **raisins**
  - apple soup 521
  - Danish barley porridge with apple and raisins 246
  - Danish birthday buns *103*, 118
  - Finnish quark buns 274–5
  - Finnish quark pudding 490–1
  - Icelandic bread soup 500
  - Icelandic Christmas cake 429
  - Icelandic deep-fried doughnut balls 306
  - Mother Monsen's cake *421*, 422–3
  - Norwegian Christmas bread *285*, 288
  - Norwegian raisin buns 274
  - Norwegian version of wort loaf 102
  - oat cookies with raisins 329
  - Pajala porridge 248
  - red sago pearl soup 520
  - soup of dried fruits 521
  - yellow sago pearl soup 520
- *randalin* 450
- *ranskanleipä* 100
- *raparperikeitto* 522
- *rårörda hjortron* 514
- *rårörda lingon* 514–15
- **raspberries**
  - rolled cake pastries 459
  - semolina sponge cake 420, *421*
- **raspberry cordial**
  - red sago pearl soup 520
- **raspberry jam**
  - Danish glazed raspberry squares 348, *351*
  - Danishes filled with vanilla custard and raspberry jam *377*, 378–9
  - Finnish fudge layer cake 454–5
  - Finnish spoon cookies 348–9
  - glazed individual almond tarts with raspberry 345
  - glazed pastries with raspberries and almond paste 469
  - green marzipan layer cake 446–7, *449*
  - individual Napoleon pastry in Sweden 472–3
  - King Gustav Adolf's pastry 494–5
- *remonce* 530
- **rhubarb**
  - rhubarb chewy caramel crumble 481
  - rhubarb compote 524
  - rhubarb soup 522
  - upside down cake 418, *419*
- **rhubarb jam**
  - Icelandic happy marriage cake 450
- **rice** 25
  - Danish almond rice pudding 488
  - Finnish salmon pasty *203*, 212
  - griddled rye breads filled with rice porridge 168–9
  - Karelian pasties 208–9
  - rice and saffron oven pancake from Gotland 493
  - rice grain soup 250
  - rice porridge 242
  - rice pudding 488
  - rice pudding for dessert 488
  - rice pudding with orange 489
  - sweet-and-sour prune and rice soup from Trondheim 251
- rice flour sponge cake 405, *419*
- rimbo buns *271*, 272–3
- *rimbobullar* *271*, 272–3
- *ris ala Malta* 488
- *risalamande* 488
- *risengrød* 242
- *risengrynsgrøt* 242
- *risgrynsgröt* 242
- *risgrynspudding* 488
- *risgrynsvälling* 250
- *riskrem* 488
- *rismjölskaka* 405, *419*
- rocky road, Leila's *389*, 391
- *rød sagosuppe* 520
- *rødgrød* 524
- *rødgrød med fløde* 497
- *rødgrøt* 524
- *røget ål med røræg* 204, *205*
- *romkugler* 390
- *rømme* 550
  - Norwegian cultured cream waffles 234
  - Norwegian sour cream porridge 246–7
- *rømme waffles* 234
- *rømmegrøt* 246–7
- *rømmevafler* 234
- *rönttönen* 207
- **rosehips** 547
  - rosehip soup 523
- rosenbrød 378
- *rosettebakkels* *307*, 310
- rosettes 303, *307*, 310
- *rosinboller* 274
- **roulades** 455, *457*
  - chocolate roulade *457*, 458
  - Faroese brown rolled roulade 458–9
  - rolled cake pastries 459
- *rúgbrauð* *127*, 132, *133*
- *rugbreyð* 134
- *rugbrød* 128, *133*
- *ruisleipä* 130–1, *133*
- *ruispuuro* 244
- *rullekaka* 455, *457*
- *rullepølse* 204, *205*
- *rullrån* 350, *351*
- *rulltårta* 455, *457*
- *rulltärtsbakelser* 459
- *rullukaka* 455, *457*
- **rum**
  - chocolate cookie crumb balls flavoured with rum 390
  - Finnish almond and rum tortes 470
  - Finnish potato chocolate balls 390–1
  - yellow sago pearl soup 520
- *rundstykker* 116
- *runebergintorttu* 470
- *runebergstårta* 470
- *rungstedkage* *285*, 288–9
- *rungstedkake* *285*, 288–9
- **rusks** 185, 190, *191*
  - almond rusks 194
  - chocolate rusks 194–5
  - Finnish sour rye rusks 193
  - graham rusks 190
  - Norwegian rye and wholemeal rusks 192–3
  - rye rusks *191*, 192
  - saffron rusks *191*, 194
  - sweet rusks to serve with sweet soups 195
- rye 25, 28–30
- **rye bread** 41, 122–45
  - Danish rye bread and beer soup 248–9
  - Icelandic bread soup 500
  - rye bread layer cake from Jylland *457*, 461
- **rye flakes** 550
  - rolled rye flake porridge 244
- **rye flour** 550
  - black bread 142–3
  - breads 122–45
  - Danish rye bread 128, *133*
  - dried bread baked with blood 140
  - Faroese rye bread 134
  - Finnish sour rye rusks 193
  - Finnish malt loaf 144
  - Finnish potato and rye loaf 143
  - Finnish rye bread 130–1, *133*
  - Finnish rye malt pudding 490
  - Finnish sweet-and-sour loaf *113*, 141
  - flatbreads from Hardanger 168
  - full grain scones 120–1
  - griddled rye breads filled with semolina or rice porridge 168–9
  - Icelandic rye bread *127*, 132, *133*
  - Icelandic soft rye flatbreads 169
  - Icelandic unleavened rye flatbreads 134
  - Karelian pasties 208–9
  - laputa bread 108
  - Norwegian rye and wholemeal rusks 192–3
  - Norwegian version of wort loaf 102
  - potato loaf based on coarse rye flour and wheat flour 106
  - potato loaf based on rye and wheat flour 105
  - rye and graham breads from Åland 142–3
  - rye and pine bark bread 136–7
  - rye and wheat flat loaves/cakes 137
  - rye crackers *191*, 196
  - rye crispbreads 180, *181*
  - rye flour porridge 244
  - rye rusks *191*, 192
  - rye shortbreads *321*, 322–3
  - rye sourdough, potato and pea soup from Virolahti 248
  - Sami soft flatbreads 170, *171*
  - Scanian rye bread 128–9, *133*
  - sifted rye and wheat rounds 138, *139*
  - soft potato flatbreads from Dalarna 162–3
  - soft wheat and rye cakes 161, *171*
  - Swedish navy rye loaf 134–5
  - Upplandic rye bread *113*, 130
- **rye malt** 548
  - Finnish rye malt pudding 490
- *ryynirieska* *171*, 174–5

S

- *saaristolaisleipä* 144
- *saffransbröd* 276, *279*
- *saffransbullar* 276–7, *279*
- *saffransbullar med kesella/kvarg* 277, *279*
- *saffranskaka* 412
- *saffranslängd eller saffranskrans* 278, *279*
- *saffransskorpor* *191*, 194
- **saffron** 75–6
  - rice and saffron oven pancake from Gotland 493
  - saffron braid or wreath 278, *279*
  - saffron buns 42
  - saffron rusks *191*, 194
  - saffron sponge cake 412
  - saffron wheat buns 276–7, *279*
  - saffron wheat buns with almond paste filling 278
  - saffron wheat buns with quark 277, *279*
  - Saint Lucy's Day saffron buns 276, *279*
- *saft* 512
- *saftevand* 512
- *saftig sockerkaka* 405
- *saftsuppe med havregryn* 514
- **sago pearls** 520
  - red sago pearl soup 520
  - sago pearl milk soup 520–1
  - sweet sago pearl soups 520
  - yellow sago pearl soup 520
- *sagogrynssoppa* 520
- *sagosuppe* 520
- *sagovälling* 520–1
- *sagovælling* 520–1
- Saint Lucy's Day saffron buns 276, *279*
- **salmon**
  - Finnish salmon pasty *203*, 212
  - sandwich torte 206
- **salt pork** 550
  - barley flour and salt pork eggless pancakes *223*, 228
  - dry porridge made from toasted oat or barley flour 242–3
  - fried salt pork 538
  - Norwegian thick salt pork pancakes 228
  - oven-baked Scanian egg cake 230–1
  - salt pork baked in the oven 538
  - salt pork fried in the pan 538
  - thick oven-baked salt pork pancake 230
- Sami soft flatbreads 170, *171*
- *sammetsvälling* 250
- *sämpylä* 114–15
- sand cake 407
- *sandkage* 406
- *sandkaka* 407
- **sandwiches** 42–3
  - folded flatbread sandwich 207
  - open-faced Danish 204, *205*
  - sandwich torte 206
- **sauces**
  - caramel sauce 422, 534–5
  - chocolate sauce 534
  - sweet cherry sauce 535
- Scanian apple pie 482–3
- Scanian egg cake, oven-baked 230–1
- Scanian festive cake baked on a skewer 491
- Scanian rye bread 128–9, *133*
- Scanian thick and chewy gingersnaps 335
- *schackrutor* 327, *341*
- schwarzwald cake 464
- *schwarzwaldtårta* 464
- **scones**
  - basic wheat scones 119
  - full grain scones 120–1
  - oat scones 120
  - wholemeal scones 120
- **seeds**
  - mixed seed crispbread 179
  - soda and cultured milk bread 114
- *seljankukkamehu* 513
- *semla* 114–15, *281*, 282
- **semolina**
  - cold semolina and red berry porridge 244–5
  - cold semolina with fresh berries 245
  - griddled rye breads filled with semolina or rice porridge 168–9
  - semolina grain soup 250
  - semolina oven pancake from Åland 494
  - semolina pudding 489
  - semolina sponge cake 420, *421*
  - wheat semolina and milk porridge 244
- *semulegrynsgrøt* 244
- *setsuuri* *113*, 141
- **shortbread** 318
  - brandy shortbread wreaths *341*, 323
  - cinnamon shortbreads *321*, 322
  - cut almond shortbreads rolled in sugar 320, *321*
  - Douglas' shortbread cookies 318
  - Finnish sticks *325*, 326
  - forked shortbreads 319
    - M-cakes 330–3
  - peasant shortbread cookies 318–19, *325*
  - rye shortbreads *321*, 322–3
  - shortbread and almond tarts 346–7, *351*
  - shortbread cookies with lemon vanilla filling 330–3
  - shortbread cookies with meringue filling 320, *341*
  - shortbread cookies with pink sugar 322
  - slightly chewy cut caramel shortbreads 319, *321*
- **shrimps**
  - sandwich torte 206
- **Shrove Tuesday** 280
  - sweet Shrove Tuesday buns from Denmark and Iceland *281*, 282–3
  - sweet Shrove Tuesday buns from Norway, Finland and Sweden *281*, 282
  - sweet Shrove Tuesday buns in milk *281*, 283
- silver cake 426–7
- *silverkaka* 426–7
- *sirapslimpa* *103*, 104
- *sirópskökur* 342
- *sitruunapullat* 370
- *Skånepepparkaka* 335
- *skånsk äppelkaka* 482–3
- *skärgårdslimpa* 144
- *skedkakor* 348–9
- *skillingsboller* 264–5
- *skjenning* 173
- *skolebrød* 274
- *skonroker* 192–3
- *skonsur* 227
- *skorpor* 190, *191*
- *skúffukaka* 430, *431*
- *skumbollar* 328
- *skyr* 536
  - Icelandic *skyr* and porridge mix 247
- *släta bullar* 264, *267*
- *småfranska* 115
- *Småländsk ostkaka* 492
- *smetana* 550
  - Finnish quark pudding 490–1
- **smoked salmon**
  - sandwich torte 206
- *smørboller* 273
- *smörbullar* 273
- *smörgåstårta* 206
- *smørgröt* 247
- *smörkringlor* 295
- *smørrebrød* 204, *205*
- *smulpaj* 480
- *smultringer* 304
- snail rolls 262, *262*
- *snegle* *373*, 374
- *sniglar* 266
- *snúður* 264–5
- *sockerkaka* 404–5, *425*
- *sockerkringlor* 296, *297*
- *sockerskorpor* 195
- soda and cultured milk bread 114

sodakage 409
sokerikakku 404–5, 414, *425*
sol over Gudhjem 204, *205*
solbullar 268, *271*
solkaka 428
sølvkake 426–7
sønderjysk rugbrødslagkage 461
söt äggröra 496
sötsur limpa *113*, 141
soups, savoury
  Danish rye bread and beer soup 248–9
  Finnish beer soup 249
  grain soups 239–40
  Icelandic bread soup 500
  Icelandic chocolate soup 500
  rice grain soup 250
  rolled oat grain soup 250
  rye sourdough, potato and pea soup from Virolahti 248
  semolina grain soup 250
  Swedish beer soup 249
  sweet-and-sour prune and rice soup from Trondheim 251
  velvet grain soup 250
soups, sweet
  apple soup 521
  cordial soup 514
  gooseberry soup 522
  red sago pearl soup 520
  rhubarb soup 522
  rosehip soup 523
  sago pearl milk soup 520–1
  soup of dried fruits 521
  sweet bilberry soup 522
  sweet blueberry soup 522
  sweet rusks to serve with sweet soups 195
  sweet sago pearl soups 520
  yellow sago pearl soup 520
sour cream
  blueberry and sour cream pie 482
  cardamom cake 424
  Finnish quark pudding 490–1
  Norwegian sour cream porridge 246–7
sourdough 40
  sourdough buns 255–7
  sourdough starter 540–1
south Swedish loaf of scaled rye flour 108
spandauer *373*, 374
spelt 26
spettekaka 491
spices 75–6
sponge cakes
  almond sponge cake 408–9
  ambrosia cake 412, *413*
  basic sponge cake 404–5, *425*
  basic sponge cake, slightly richer variation 405
  chocolate and coconut glazed chocolate sponge cake 430, *431*
  chocolate, coffee and coconut glazed chocolate sponge cake 430
  coconut sponge cake 429
  Danish sponge cake 406
  Danish sponge cake, contemporary recipe 410
  Danish sponge cake, historical recipe 409
  egg-white sponge cake 426–7
  Faroese green almond sponge cake *425*, 432
  filled sponge cake 406–7
  Finnish sponge cake 414
  glazed orange sponge cake with candied orange peel 412, *413*
  jellied fruit cake 460–1
  light sponge cake for layer cakes 446
  light sponge cake with coconut frosting 428
  Maj's spring bites 432
  marble cake 410, *413*
  Nordic sponge cakes 404
  old-fashioned Danish sponge cake 409
  potato starch sponge cake 407
  rice flour sponge cake 405, *419*
  saffron sponge cake 412
  semolina sponge cake 420, *421*
  silver cake 426–7
  sponge cake and butter icing squares with coconut 428–9
  sponge cake glazed with almonds and caramel 410–11, *413*
  tiger cake 410, *413*
  tosca cake 410–11, *413*
spoon cookies, Finnish 348–9
sprøde vafler 232, *233*
stikkelsbærkompot 524
stikkelsbærsuppe 522
stjerneskud 204, *205*
strawberries
  rolled cake pastries 459
  strawberries and cream 497
  strawberry layer cake 454
strawberry jam
  Norwegian marzipan layer cake 448, *449*
studentskor 349
stut 207
stuvor 310–11
sugar 549
  apple cake with nuts and pearl sugar 416–17, *421*
  brown sugar pastry filling 530
  brown sugar yeast cake from Funen Island 286, *287*
  cinnamon sugar 535
  cut almond shortbreads rolled in sugar 320, *321*
  raw eggs and sugar 496
  shortbread cookies with pink sugar 322
  striped peppermint sticks 392–3
  sugared cloudberries 514
  sugared lingonberries 514–15
  sugared pancakes leavened with baking powder 229
  vanilla sugar 536
  white sugar pastry filling 530
sukkerkage 404–5, *425*
sukkerkake 404–5, *425*
sukkerkavringer 195
suksesskake 452–3, *467*
sultsina 168–9
sun buns 268, *271*
super-fast, if-you-get-unexpected-guests buns 358
súreplasúlta 525
surskorpor 193
svartbröd 142–3
sveler 226–7
sveskekompot 524–5
sviskegrøt 524–5
sviskonkräm 524–5
Swedish almond meringue torte 466, *467*
Swedish beer soup 249
Swedish Christmas toffee 392
Swedish curd cakes 491
Swedish gooey chocolate cake 432–3, *435*
  Swedish gooey chocolate cake made from white chocolate 433, *435*
  Swedish gooey chocolate cake muffins *369*, 370
Swedish gooey lemon cake 434
Swedish hard blood flatbreads 164–5, *181*
Swedish marzipan Napoleon hats 338–9
Swedish navy rye loaf 134–5
Swedish soft or hard flatbreads 160–1, *181*
Swedish sugared sweet kringles 296, *297*
sweet-and-sour prune and rice soup from Trondheim 251
sweets 383–4
  peppermint and chocolate pastilles *389*, 394
  striped peppermint sticks 392–3
  Swedish Christmas toffee 392
syltrutor med havregryn 434

T
tårta 446
tårtbotten 446
tarts
  almond tart shells 42, 344, *351*
  Danish almond tart leavened with yeast *285*, 288–9
  glazed almond tart 346
  glazed individual almond tarts 344–5, *351*
  glazed individual almond tarts, historical version 345
  glazed individual almond tarts with raspberry 345
  glazed individual almond tarts with tosca topping 346
  glazed individual gingerbread almond tarts 346
  shortbread and almond tarts 346–7, *351*
  tarts with chocolate filling and green icing 349
tatar 204, *205*
täytekakku 446
tea buns 118
teacakes, rolled oat 110
teboller 118
tekakor 118
tekakor med havregryn 110
tiger cake 410, *413*
tigerkaka 410, *413*
tigerkake 410, *413*
tiikerikakku 410, *413*
tilslørte bondepiker 497
tippaleipä 310–11
tjinuski 534–5
tjinuskipaj 483
tjinuskitårta 454–5
tjockpannkaka 230
tjukklefse 167, *171*
toast, French 235
toffee
  almond and toffee buns 270, *271*
  Leila's rocky road *389*, 391
  Swedish Christmas toffee 392
tomtegröt 242
torplyckor *321*, 322–3
tortes 446
  almond and buttercream torte 452–3, *467*
  almond and butter egg-cream torte *449*, 468
  chocolate rolled torte *457*, 458
  Faroese brown rolled torte 458–9
  Finnish almond and rum tortes 470
  hazelnut and mandarin rolled torte 456, *457*
  mazarin torte 346
  Oscar II's torte *449*, 468
  pancake torte 469
  princess torte 446–7, *449*
  rolled cake pastries 459
  rolled torte 455, *457*
  sandwich torte 206
  Swedish almond meringue torte 466, *467*
tosca buns 270, *271*
tosca cake 410–11, *413*
tosca topping, glazed individual almond tarts with 346
toscabullar 270, *271*
toscakaka 410–11, *413*
toscakakku 410–11, *413*
toscamazariner 346
trekant *373*, 378
trekornsbrød 109
trekornsbröd 109
trifle, Danish apple 498
trollgröt 244–5
trollkrem 499
Trondheimssuppe 251
tuiles
  almond tuiles 352
  Faroese tuiles 354
  Norwegian sweet pressed cardamom and vanilla tuiles 353
  Norwegian tuiles 352–3
  oat tuiles 354–5
  rolled tuiles 350, *351*
  tuiles fried in a Swedish small pancake griddle 354
tunnbröd 160–1, *181*
tunnpaltbröd 164–5, *181*
tunnpannkaka 224
tuttul 162–3
tvebakker 190, *191*
tvibökur 190, *191*
twist bread 110, *111*
twisted knot buns 261, *261*
tynnlefse 165
tytinggrøt 525
tyttebærgrøt 525

U
ugnspannkaka 230
unelmatorttu *457*, 458
upp och ner kaka 418, *419*
Upplandic rye bread *113*, 130
Upplandskubb *113*, 130
upside down cake 418, *419*
uunipannukakku 230
uunipuuro 246

V
vaffel 234
vaflur 235
vandegrød 246
vaniljbullar 268, *271*
vaniljhjärtan 472
vaniljhorn 340, *341*
vanilla
  Norwegian sweet pressed cardamom and vanilla tuiles 353
vanilla cream, uncooked 533
vanilla custard 532, 533
  Danishes filled with vanilla custard and raspberry jam *377*, 378–9
  green marzipan layer cake 446–7, *449*
  individual Napoleon pastry in Sweden 472–3
  jellied fruit cake 460–1
  open vanilla cream buns 268, *271*
  vanilla cream buns 266, *267*
  vanilla custard hearts 472
  vanilla ice cream 534
  water pastries 465
vanilla sugar 536
  Maj's spring bites 432
  vanilla horns 340, *341*
vannbakkels 465
vassgraut 243
västgötawienerbröd 259, *271*
vattenkringlor *297*, 298
vattlingon 515
vehnäleipä 100
velvet grain soup 250
veriohukaiset 231
vernalization 27
vesirinkelit *297*, 298
vestfirskar hveitikökur 170
vetedeg 258
vetekransar och vetelängder 259
vetemjölsvälling 250
vetescones 119
Viborgskringlor 299
Viipurinrinkeli 299
vinarbrauð 372
vinarbreyð 372
vinarterta 452
vispgröt 244–5
vispipuuro 244–5
vit chokladkladdkaka 433, *435*
vitgröt 247
vitt brød 100
vodka 28
vöfflur 234–5
vohveleita 232, *233*
voileipäkakku 206
voisilmäpullat 273
vörtbröd 101, *103*

W
wafers
  meringue cream puffs 328
waffles 232
  crisp waffles 232, *233*
  egg waffles 232
  Faroese waffles 235
  Icelandic waffles 234–5
  Norwegian cultured cream waffles 234
  Norwegian waffles 234
water pastries 465
wheat 25, 26–8
wheat flour
  breads 90–121
  Norwegian wheat flour and butter porridge 247
  Norwegian wheat pancakes 225
  plain sweet wheat buns 264
  saffron wheat buns 276–7, *279*
  saffron wheat buns with almond paste filling 278
  saffron wheat buns with quark 277, *279*
  sifted rye and wheat rounds 138, *139*
  soft wheat and rye cakes 161, *171*
  sweet leavened wheat dough crescents with cinnamon filling 268–9
  sweet leavened wheat dough crescents with hazelnut filling 269, *271*
  sweet wheat bun dough, basic recipe 258
  sweet wheat bun dough, Leila's recipe 259
  sweet wheat bun dough, Tove's recipe 258
whey spread, sweet reduced 536
wholemeal flour
  Norwegian wholemeal loaf 102
  wholemeal scones 120
wienerbrød 372
wienerbröd 372
wienerlängd 375, *377*
wienerleipä 372
wine
  Magnus's glögg 539
  mulled wine 538–9
wort 551
  Norwegian version of wort loaf 102
  wort loaf 101, *103*
wreath cakes and buns
  almond wreath cake 462–3
  brandy shortbread wreaths *341*, 323
  saffron braid or wreath 278, *279*
  wreath buns 259

Y
yeast 40, 41
  brown sugar yeast cake from Funen Island 286, *287*
  Danish almond tart leavened with yeast *285*, 288–9
  dry yeast 60–1
  fresh yeast 58–60
yellow split peas
  rye sourdough, potato and pea soup from Virolahti 248
yogurt
  semolina sponge cake 420, *421*

Z
zuleikatårta 452–3, *467*

RECIPE NOTES

Butter should always be unsalted, unless otherwise specified.

All spices are freshly ground, unless otherwise specified.

Eggs and individual vegetables and fruits, such as carrots and apples, are assumed to be medium, unless otherwise specified.

All sugar is white caster (superfine) sugar and all brown sugar is cane or demerara unless otherwise specified.

All cream is 36–40% fat heavy whipping cream unless otherwise specified.

All milk is full-fat (whole) at 3% fat, homogenized and lightly pasteurized, unless otherwise specified.

All yeast is fresh, unless otherwise specified.

All salt is fine sea salt, unless otherwise specified.

Breadcrumbs are always dried, unless otherwise specified.

Round cake pans are assumed to be springform, unless otherwise specified.

Cooking times are for guidance only, as individual ovens vary. If using a conventional oven, follow the manufacturer's instructions concerning oven temperatures. For more information on ovens, see pages 62–63.

Exercise a high level of caution when following recipes involving any potentially hazardous activity, including the use of high temperatures, open flames and when deep-frying. In particular, when deep-frying, add food carefully to avoid splashing, wear long sleeves, and never leave the pan unattended.

Some recipes include raw or very lightly cooked eggs, meat, or fish, and fermented products. These should be avoided by the elderly, infants, pregnant women, convalescents, and anyone with an impaired immune system.

Exercise caution when making fermented products, ensuring all equipment is spotlessly clean, and seek expert advice if in any doubt.

When no quantity is specified, for example of oils, and sugars used for finishing dishes or for deep frying, quantities are discretionary and flexible.

All herbs, shoots, flowers and leaves should be picked fresh from a clean source. Exercise caution when foraging for ingredients; any foraged ingredients should only be eaten if an expert has deemed them safe to eat.

Both metric and imperial measures are used in this book. Follow one set of measurements throughout, not a mixture, as they are not interchangeable.

All spoon and cup measurements are level, unless otherwise stated. 1 teaspoon = 5 ml; 1 tablespoon = 15 ml.

Australian standard tablespoons are 20 ml, so Australian readers are advised to use 3 teaspoons in place of 1 tablespoon when measuring small quantities.

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